UNDERSTANDING MALI: LESSONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

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14. ABSTRACT

In 2012, Mali almost collapsed under the combined pressure of a military coup and a Tuareg revolt. In the resulting chaos, terrorist groups took advantage of the situation to establish in the north of the country a seemingly Islamic theocracy where Sharia Law was the rule. These events provoked massive movements of moderate Muslims toward the south and the military intervention of France and African countries to destroy those terrorist groups. This situation was all-the-more surprising because a decade before Mali represented a model of democracy in Western Africa. Through a comparative-politics study of Mali, this thesis identifies the root causes of the Malians problem as well as factors that aggravated the already unstable situation in Mali. This thesis puts in perspective a deep domestic crisis fueled by historic ethnic grievances and the increasing disenfranchisement of one part of the population. On top of this crisis geography, chronic corruption, religious extremism, and the colonial legacy of Mali exacerbated the intrinsic problems of Mali. In the end, understanding the true causes of the Malian crisis can help anticipate future ones in countries presenting the same characteristics as Mali. Even though the implications for other countries will be different the process of escalation experienced by Mali provides a good example with which to compare other sub-Saharan countries, many of which present worrisome similarities with Mali.

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The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, Air University, the French Government, the Ministry of Defense, or the French Air Force.

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ABSTRACT

In 2012, Mali almost collapsed under the combined pressure of a military coup and a Tuareg revolt. In the resulting chaos, terrorist groups took advantage of the situation to establish in the north of the country a seemingly Islamic theocracy where Sharia Law was the rule. These events provoked massive movements of moderate Muslims toward the south and the military intervention of France and African countries to destroy those terrorist groups. This situation was all-the-more surprising because a decade before Mali represented a model of democracy in Western Africa. Through a comparative-politics study of Mali, this thesis identifies the root causes of the Malians problem as well as factors that aggravated the already unstable situation in Mali. This thesis puts in perspective a deep domestic crisis fueled by historic ethnic grievances and the increasing disenfranchisement of one part of the population. On top of this crisis, geography, chronic corruption, religious extremism, and the colonial legacy of Mali exacerbated the intrinsic problems of Mali. In the end, understanding the true causes of the Malian crisis can help anticipate future ones in countries presenting the same characteristics as Mali. Even though the implications for other countries will be different, the process of escalation experienced by Mali provides a good example with which to compare other sub-Saharan countries, many of which present worrisome similarities with Mali.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Chapter 1 - Introduction

On 17 January 2012, a Tuareg rebel group named MNLA (a French acronym for National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) attacked the town of Menaka in the northeast of Mali. After three previous rebellions orchestrated in the 60s, the 90s, and in 2006, the Tuaregs rebelled again against the central power of Bamako, the capital of Mali located in the southern part of the country. In the wake of the Libyan crisis, most Malian and western news media reported this event as the move of terrorist collaborators or Qadhafi's mercenaries coming back after the fall of the dictator. However, neither terrorist groups nor the Libyan government's collapse provoked this move. It was in fact the result of the accumulation of grievances that had perdured for a very long time, between the ruling black population of Mali and the Tuareg people living in the northern part of the country.

In February, the Tuaregs had routed the Malian military from the country's north and attacked Kidal, one of the major cities of in northern Mali. Frustration grew increasingly within the ranks of the Malian army, which blamed President Amadou Toumani Touré for the weakness of the army. Since the revolt started, Malian officers had complained about their lack of weaponry and skills, in comparison to the well-trained, organized, and equipped Tuareg rebels. Seeing no change in the army situation, angry soldiers revolted against the central government on 22 March 2012 and took over the capital city of Bamako. They reproached the government for not providing security forces with adequate means to defend the country against terrorists.[1]

Taking advantage of the military coup in the south, where the military reassembled to secure its hold on the capital, the Tuaregs, now joined by *Ansar Eddine*'s militia and its terrorist backers, pushed to the south. By the beginning of April, the Tuaregs and their allies of convenience had captured Gao and Timbuktu, which put the northern half of the country under Tuareg and Islamist control. The map bellow depicts the situation as of January 2013.

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[1] Adam Nossiter, "Soldiers Overthrow Mali Government," http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/23/world/africa/mali-coup-france-calls-for-elections.html (accessed Apr 16, 2014).

Figure 1: Northern Mali Conflict Map
Source: "Northern Mali Conflict Map,"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Northern_Mali_conflict.svg (accessed Apr 16, 2014).

In June 2012, as the Malian government forces had withdrawn from northern Mali, the Islamist groups started their offensive on the secular Tuaregs of the MNLA. Little-by-little, the MNLA lost ground in front of the Islamist fighters, who eventually achieved control over most Northern Mali by November 2012.

In the face of the Islamist threat, the international community agreed upon international intervention in Mali, which materialized on 11 January 2013 with the French Operation Serval. Since then, French troops have been fighting alongside African troops against Groups of Armed Terrorists (GAT) in order to restore the sovereignty and integrity of Mali.

Thus, the situation in Mali motivated this study because it eventually presents similarities with situations that the international community has already faced in the twenty-first century. More exactly, this study is interested in the factors that led to the present situation in Mali. Since the attacks of 11 September 2001 on the United States, Western countries have been involved in a continuous struggle against transnational terrorist organizations. In that regard, international military intervention in foreign countries has been one of the means used to take care of the terrorist threat. However, conflicts against terrorists groups such as in Afghanistan have proven long and difficult because of the capability of those groups to find havens in neighboring countries or even within the country itself. In our Western experience, these conflicts have presented a cost—human, moral, and economic—that becomes increasingly difficult to support. Yet, in Mali, history seemed to repeat itself.

Reaction—not to say repression—to such situations has not proven to be the best way to resolve this kind of issue. Accordingly, this study focuses on the prevention aspect of crisis resolution. Indeed, by trying to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions of instability that led to the present situation in Mali, this study aspires to provide decision makers with concrete factors that should deserve careful consideration in crisis prevention.

Considering more carefully these factors could indeed allow avoiding, or at least hampering, Mali-like situations occurring again in places presenting similarities to the Malian context. This latter point is very important to keep in mind by the reader of the present study. This study does not provide a general answer to instability or to terrorist takeover of a sovereign government. It only provides an answer for the very case of Mali. Thus, one should be careful in applying this study's recommendations to possible analogous cases.

Context is very important, especially when policy recommendations depend on it. However, this study opens the path for further investigation about instability mitigation or, at least, about the avoidance of military intervention. Besides, the fact that, today, what happens in a single region can have implications at the international level justifies

the exclusive focus of this study on Mali.[2] Stability of the international order is no longer the exclusive jurisdiction of Great Powers. So understanding the stability dynamics at the smaller scale of Mali and the Sahelian region is relevant.

This being said, this study demonstrates that, in the specific case of Mali, the necessary and sufficient conditions of instability that led to today's chaotic situation were an old, unaddressed suspicion between the black and Tuareg ethnicities, coupled with the systematic disenfranchisement—economic and political—of one of these two ethnicities. On top of these two main conditions, this study also puts into perspective aggravating factors of instability, applicable to the Malian context. Thus, even though we consider through this study religion as a potential main source of instability because of theoretical reasons, religion was only an aggravating factor. Similarly, this study demonstrates that geography, corruption, and colonial legacy have systematically reinforced the harmful effects of ethnic and disenfranchisement grievances in Mali.

This paper begins by identifying factors influencing stability or instability, through the review of governance literature and related studies. Once identified, we use these factors as lenses through which we analyze their effects on the stability/instability of Mali during three different periods of its history, i.e., the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial eras. Then, the cross-history evaluation of these factors, based on comparing and contrasting their effects on stability, allows to identify those which were necessary and sufficient to provoke today's situation. Finally, we will issue some recommendations concerning the situation in Mali. Again, we recall for the reader that he must comprehend the conclusions and recommendations drawn in this paper in the specific context of Mali. Any hasty generalization could be misleading.

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[2] Barry Buzan, and Professor Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security (Cambridge Studies in International Relations)* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11.

Chapter 2 - Analytical Lenses

In this chapter, I set up the framework of a comparative study before subsequently applying that structure to a case-study of Mali. The objective of this chapter is to find the link between factors of instability in Africa and the development of terrorist activities in order to use these factors as lenses of analysis to apply to the case study of Mali. However, in the complex field of the study of terrorism, manifestations of the induced instability have often been easier to identify than the factors themselves. Consequently, people usually tend to confuse these manifestations with the causes, and overlook the root causal factors.

In this chapter, I go beyond these manifestations in order to identify some possible factors of instability and their link to the development of terrorist activities. Thus, this chapter starts by establishing the relation between poor governance, instability, and terrorism. This first analysis allows us to narrow the field of research to weak and failed states and to some key characteristics of such states, i.e., inability to provide security, lack of legitimacy of the government, and lack or absence of a general sense of justice in the country.

Then, having identified these features, I further study them in the specific context of African countries, which allows me to identify some relevant factors provoking such manifestations in African weak and failed states. The last section of the chapter categorizes these factors in two classes: main factors and aggravating factors of instability.

Governance, Instability and Terrorism

The present study only focuses on small states or powers and seeks to explain state vulnerability to insurgency, as well as possible take-over by non-state actors, including those from outside the national populace. In this project, these small states refer to countries that have little impact on the international scene—at least directly, i.e., countries whose military and economic powers are limited. In other words, this study is interested in countries similar to the sub-Saharan ones, specifically, those in which the

political system is not as mature as the one that exists in developed countries in the West. Among the multitude of criteria that differentiate great powers from the small ones, maturity immediately calls one to examine governance.

In that regard, we can put into perspective the relation between the nature of governance and terrorism, as well as between the nature of governance and the level of instability. From these observations, the conclusion that instability fosters terrorism is merely a logical implication. However, in order to grasp correctly how governance, instability, and terrorism relate to one another, we first must examine what terrorism actually implies in terms of governance. The problem with this examination is that terrorism is not simple to assess and study, as the impossibility of fueling an internationally agreed-upon definition testifies.

Indeed, even today, defining terrorism is not an easy thing to do because terrorism does not have an internationally recognized definition. A plethora of academic studies and authors have tried to provide an exact definition of terrorism. In terms of international standards, the United Nations (UN) has not yet defined terrorism. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that each country, and sometimes each agency within various countries, has its own definition of terrorism. However, in order to go on with this study, the definition of terrorism considered herein is the one used by the US Department of State, which defines terrorism as: "…premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually to influence an audience."[1] This definition puts into perspective three important notions, political motivation, noncombatant targets, and audience influence. If we focus on these three ideas, the origin of the definition does not matter so much because whoever defines terrorism shares them.

The fact of the matter is that these three notions clearly point to the center of gravity of terrorist actions, which is population support. Terrorist action aims in particular at decreasing the population's support for the ruling government, in order to achieve the political change desired by the terrorists. To prevent loss of popular support or legitimacy, governments facing terrorism must show sound governance.

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[1] United States Department of State, "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003," (2004), xii.

The better the governance, the more difficult it will be for terrorists to destabilize the state. In her work to understand *How Terrorism Ends,* Audrey Cronin historically examines how terrorist campaigns come to an end. In her investigation, she finds that one reason for the end of terrorism is its success. In modern times, she thus notes that terrorist groups only succeeded when they were able to take over the functions and governance of the state.[2] A logical deduction then is that good governance by the state is a necessary condition to hinder or thwart terrorist activities. That is why, with regard to the question examined in this study, the quality of governance is important.

In *Political Order in Changing Societies,* Samuel P. Huntington describes the "political gap."[3] For Huntington, this political gap is the difference between stable and unstable countries. Yet, this difference is not a function of the form of their respective governments; rather, it is a function of what he calls the "degree of their government." This degree reflects the level of consensus, community, legitimacy, organization, and effectiveness of government. In other words, Huntington introduces what we would call today the quality of state governance.

The quality of governance directly affects any country's level of domestic stability or instability. Whatever the political regime, good governance usually makes a country more stable than does bad governance.[4] Huntington bases his argument on the examination of the social and political climate in modernizing countries that embraced communism. Despite their inability—somehow similar to free governments—to provide the ultimate model to eradicate social problems such as famine and underdevelopment, communist countries were stable because they implemented a form of governance that was relevant to their political and social situations. Conversely, bad governance fosters instability. Furthermore, bad governance increases the chances of terrorist activities. It is thus logical to assume that terrorist groups take advantage of the instability generated by bad governance, either as it exists and/or as it is fomented by terrorists.

A recent study by Cox, Falconer, and Stackhouse corroborates this assertion. Indeed, they determined that anything that creates great instability fosters the

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[2] Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 93.
[3] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (Adarsh Books, 2009), 1.

development of terrorist activities, whether domestic or international. To come to this conclusion, they consider possible and generally agreed upon root causes of terrorism in both Asia and Africa, which are poverty and clash of civilizations. By clash of civilizations, they mean tensions provoked by religion, ethnicity, language, culture, and history. They also study the impact of democratization on the spread of terrorism and conclude that it will not end terrorism. Instead, they find that the common denominator among all these notions—poverty, clash of civilizations, and democratization—is the degree of instability that they produce. Poverty and the clash of civilizations induce instability by creating tensions, while democratization contributes to an unstable political climate during the maturation period of the democratic institutions.[5]

The conclusions of Susan Fahey's PhD dissertation strengthen this finding. Her study examined the relationship between political instability and terrorism. She conducted a comparative-politics study of 147 countries over 35 years, from 1970 to 2005. Her independent variable was instability, while her dependent variables were the number of terrorist events.[6] Regarding the large numbers of possible factors of instability in such a large panel of countries, she used three different models of control variables—political, socio-economic, and ethnic—to conduct her study.[7]

She then formed several hypotheses with regard to the relationship between terrorism and instability, such as existence of an intensity-related relationship, influence of the type of instability and frequency of the occurrence of instability.[8] In the analytic part of her dissertation, she applied each hypothesis to each control variable in her model. When comparing the outcomes of each model, she found that instability was associated with higher levels of terrorism. Furthermore, she showed that the type of instability influences the degree to which terrorist activity develops.[9] In other words, she established the direct link between the occurrence of instability and the increase of terrorist

[4] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 8.

[5] Dan G. Cox, John Falconer, and Brian Stackhouse, *Terrorism, Instability, and Democracy in Asia and Africa (Northeastern Series on Democratization and Political Development)*, First Edition ed., (Northeastern, 2009), 5.

[6] Susan Fahey, "State Instability and Terrorism" (University of Maryland, 2010), 59-81.

[7] Fahey, "State Instability and Terrorism," 90-99.

[8] Fahey, "State Instability and Terrorism," 100-04.

[9] Fahey, "State Instability and Terrorism," 187.

activities.[10] Therefore, instability is the cradle in which terrorist movements find their necessary substratum.

Instability vis-à-vis Stability

Consequently, to find the circumstances that enable terrorist groups to succeed in overturning part of a country, one must look for the conditions that are necessary for instability to appear. Yet this study first needs to differentiate between stability and instability, which are notions quite difficult to understand at first sight. Analysts often use these ideas in common language, but fail to delineate clearly between stability and instability. Where one sees a rather stable country, another could see an unstable one. Thus, before going further, it is necessary to understand first what stability and instability imply with regard to states. What defines a stable state and, conversely, an unstable one?

First, one cannot consider the concepts of stability and instability as two clearly separated notions. One cannot talk of stability without considering instability. One should consider the passage from being stable to unstable as a phenomenon occuring on a continuum and always consider stability vis-à-vis instability and vice-versa. The State Failure Task Force developed a definition of state instability in a report in November 1995. This task force, sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency, defined unstable states as states harboring "civil conflicts, political crises, and massive human rights violations that are typically associated with state breakdown."[11] However, such definitions remain too broad to comprehend precisely the concept of instability.

In an attempt to quantify state stability and instability, nine years ago the Fund for Peace (FFP) created the failed states index (FSI). This index aims at following the evolution of stability vis-à-vis instability in countries around the world in order to clarify the differences between the two concepts. Because the manifestations of instability are various, the FFP examines the social, economic, and political pressures that have not been managed by professional, legitimate and representative state institutions, and from

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[10] Fahey, "State Instability and Terrorism," 201.

which instability stems. The FFP updates the index annually according to socio-economic, political, and military indicators and permits the ranking of countries according to the gravity of those pressures.

In 2010, the FSI graded 177 countries, enabling the FFP to establish its index with regard to the states whose sovereignty is recognized by the UN. That is why, for example, nascent countries such as Palestine are not included. The large amount of data to which the Fund has access—physical and electronic—provides a good idea of the health of the evaluated states. In particular, it helps identify weak and failed states among those whose instability—or failed state index—is in the highest part of the roster.[12] Beyond the broad definition of instability and the quantitative attempt of the FFP to differentiate stability from instability, it is interesting that both qualitative and quantitative approaches of those notions link instability to weak and/or failed states.

Therefore, it is logical to focus the study on weak and failed states given that they are the states affected by the greatest instability. Indeed, as shown earlier, occurrence of instability fosters the development of terrorist activities. Thus, weak, failing and/or failed states provide favorable ground for the development of terrorist activities. This being said, it does not mean that terrorism develops only in weak and failed states.[13] However, examining further weak and failed states will provide characteristics of states that facilitate the development of terrorist activities. Quantifying the degree of weakness of a state with the failed states index is obviously a good start to frame the scope of instability. However, it does not provide a clear definition of weak and failed states that would allow looking for identifiers of such states. Fortunately a large collection of academic studies on weak and failed states is available. Many of the studies refer to the same academic work from of Robert I. Rotberg; therefore, I will consider the definition of weak and failed states in the following discussion based on his book *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*.

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[11] Daniel C. Esty*, et al.*, "Working Papers: State Failure Task Force Report," http://www.williamtsuma.com/sites/default/files/esty-d-c-et-al-1995-state-failure-task-force-report.pdf (accessed 20 January, 2014), 1.

[12] Nate Haken*, et al.*, "The Failed States Index 2013," *The Fund For Peace Publication* (2013), 3.

Weak and Failed States Manifestations

First, weak states are states in crisis; their weakness can be either inherent or temporary due to a specific context. The core weakness can be due to geographical or fundamental resources constraints. The span of the territory of a state can indeed affect its strength with regard to sovereignty if the state does not have the means to secure it.[14] Similarly, resource scarcity could result in economic constraints limiting what the state can do for its population. The basis of the Sudanese crisis over the independence of south Sudan was based on oil being found only in the south. Exacerbating the civil conflict between North and South Sudan, the south possessed the resources, while the north possessed the infrastructure to exploit and transform them. On the one hand, the resource-rich south was unable to get the dividends of oil due to lack of infrastructure, while, on the other hand, the north could not get any benefit from its oil refinery infrastructure. This tension contributed to the conflict that, over the years, weakened the overall country of Sudan.

Furthermore, weak states usually harbor crises provoked by ethnic, religious, and/or other civilian tensions that have not yet thoroughly become overtly violent. Examples of civilian crises are many. For example, observation of the rule of law, but only on the breach of this rule, is one of them. Corruption is also a problem of weak states, as is their capability to ensure basic public services such as education and minimum health care. In addition, ruling despots, elected or not, often persecute the societies over which they rule.[15]

In addition to these naturally weak states, some states, seemingly strong, are in fact weak because they do not fulfill their responsibilities toward their people. Such states are often autocracies, which take advantage of repressive means of controlling dissent to

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[13] Edward Newman, "Weak States, State Failure, and Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 4 (2007), 463-88.

[14] James A Piazza, "Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism?," *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (2008), 470.

[15] Robert I. Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, Kindle edition ed., (Princeton University Press, 2003), 4.

foster their internal security. North Korea has a very tight control over its population, but it allows its people to starve.[16]

Now, at the high end of state weakness are failed states characterized as "tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions."[17] Moreover, failed states show an enduring character of violence fueled by strong political or geographical demands for shared power or even autonomy. One can often finds the roots of conflict in ethnic, religious, linguistic, or inter-communal enmity. Furthermore, the fear of "the other," which is characteristic of this enmity, usually fosters some security dilemma. This dilemma often leads to preventive use of force by the regime against a significant portion of its population. Failed states also have great difficulties controlling their peripheral regions, which is usually a corollary of geographical constraints.[18] Worse than weak states, failed states are unable to provide any kind of public services. Failed states usually harbor rampant corruption with limited economic prospects; opportunities are often reserved for a privileged few such as dominant ethnicities. In many such cases, dominant groups often persecute people of minority ethnicities.

In fact, when examining the characteristics of weak and failed states, it appears that both kinds of states are unable to provide what Pennock labeled "political goods." He classified political goods in four categories: security, welfare, justice, and liberty.[19] This classification of political goods deserves further discussion because we think we can reduce it to three categories when we examine it through the lens of weak and failed states.

For Pennock, the better security a state provides to its citizens, the stronger and more stable it is.[20] The persistent internal crises that weak and failed states know, sometimes worsened by the inability of failed states to control their peripheral regions, hamper their capability of ensuring security across their territory, especially the security of their citizens.

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[16] Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, 4.
[17] Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, 6.
[18] Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, 4.
[19] J Ronald Pennock, "Political Development, Political Systems, and Political Goods," *World Politics* 18, no. 03 (1966), 420.
[20] Pennock, "Political Development, Political Systems, and Political Goods," 422.

The absence of public services and the insufficiency of their physical infrastructure testify to their incapability of providing welfare such as proper education and health care. By the same token, the corruption and ethnic inequalities that are rampant in weak and failed states show an obvious lack of social justice in these countries. With regard to liberties, one must first realize that it is not only a Western value. Whatever the political regime of weak and failed states is, people still enjoy significant freedom. What matters for a stable state is in fact that citizens enjoy a certain level of liberty in order to fulfill the ultimate goals of the entire nation, not just of a few.[21]

For example, liberal democracies have a definition of liberties that differs from the definition of liberties adopted by communist countries. When communist regimes impose limitations on individual liberties in order to foster the ultimate freedom of the whole society, liberal democracies consider that limitation to be an obstacle to liberty in general. Nevertheless, citizens of both kinds of regimes eventually enjoy a predictable environment.[22] The corruption and social preference that characterize weak and failed states favor more the interests of a few privileged than the ones of the majority. In other words, weak and failed states do not succeed in providing liberties to their peoples.

Thus, Pennock's model of political goods is an interesting way of assessing the quality of the government, but within the framework of this discussion—weak and failed states, instability and terrorism—one can simplify his model into three notions: security, legitimacy of the government, and a general sense of justice. Security remains an essential political good to consider because internal conflicts or conflicts-in-being, which characterize weak or failed states, generate instability evidenced by a lack of security.

Legitimacy of the government directly relates to the capability of the state to provide justice and liberties. Indeed, justice and liberties, by establishing a political climate where a few privileged do not oppress the majority, give the government its legitimacy. The Arab Spring events are a perfect illustration of this phenomenon. The autocratic and corrupted leaders of the Maghreb countries lost their legitimacy among their citizens who could no longer endure injustice and oppressive state policies. However the populace characterizes its leaders, acceptance of the government by the

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[21] Pennock, "Political Development, Political Systems, and Political Goods," 425.
[22] Pennock, "Political Development, Political Systems, and Political Goods," 425.

citizens reduces the odds of instability. In weak and failed states harboring ethnic, religious, or inter-communal grievances, legitimacy of the government is a valid notion to consider.

As for the general sense of justice, it is a product of justice and welfare. Indeed, justice and welfare ensure that everybody can enjoy some kind of opportunity by providing equity and infrastructures/commodities. However, social grievances and preferences that characterize weak or failed states, added to their lack of infrastructure, make a general sense of justice very unlikely to appear. Therefore, reduced capability to provide security, little legitimacy of governments and absence of a general sense of justice are tangible manifestations of weak and failed states.

So far, this review of stability and instability has begun to link the factors that create increased chances of seeing the development of terrorist activities. Furthermore, with instability being associated to weak and failed states, we concluded that weak and failed states offer fertile grounds for the development of terrorist activities. The study has also put in evidence three important features of weak and failed states, which include inability to provide security, lack legitimacy of the government, and lack or absence of a general sense of justice. Therefore, looking for the factors that enable such features will provide us with necessary conditions for the development and expansion of terrorist activities in such states. At first sight, those features seem obviously and rightly related to one another, but examining each one of them separately will provide a more detailed lens with which to consider the problem.

Narrowing the study of weak and failed states to three key features does not necessarily decrease the number of factors enabling those characteristics, if one considers the global group of weak and failed states. However, the relatively small scope of the puzzle that we are trying to solve in this paper—geographically speaking—allows us to reduce the scope of weak and failed states to those of Africa. This point deserves clarification because even though many weak and failed states are present in Africa, we do not find all of them there. A global study of the issue would require additional work; a task that is clearly beyond the scope of this project. So, now we have identified key features of weak and failed states, the rest of this chapter will link them to necessary enabling conditions, in the specific context of Africa.

14

Impediments to security in African weak and failed states

In 1919, the German sociologist Max Weber partially defined the modern state as: "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."[23] This monopoly of force allows states to provide security, specifically human security, within their territory. Two notions particularly interesting in this definition are the use of force, which implies a certain level of violence, and territory, which refers to geography.

The role of the regime is indeed to protect its citizens from foreign and domestic threats. However, according to Rotberg, weak and failed states are characterized by ethnic or religious crises, which usually degenerate into civil conflict—especially in failed states—increasing domestic insecurity. Stathis Kalyvas defined civil conflict as "an armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities."[24] Thus, the more the situation degrades in weak or failed states, the more the use of force ceases to be the monopoly of weak or failed states. At some point, they become no longer capable of ensuring human security for their citizens who naturally take up arms to protect themselves in the absence of other alternative.[25]

Examples of such situations are numerous in sub-Saharan Africa today. To cite only two of them, there is the Central African Republic (CAR), which is experiencing a strong religious clash between its Christian and Muslim populations. Tensions started when the Muslim rebel group Seleka disbanded and committed atrocities on Christians in the countryside as reprisal for the Christian domination. Seleka members being Muslim, the Christian majority—about 80 percent of the CAR population—decided to create

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[23] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," http://media.pfeiffer.edu/lridener/dss/Weber/polvoc.html (accessed 22 January, 2014).
[24] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)*, 1 ed., (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17.
[25] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, Reprint ed., (Oxford University Press, USA, 2011), 128.

militias to compensate for the lack of security provided by the central government.[26] Insecurity is today characterized by atrocities committed by both sides based on both religious beliefs and the human desire for revenge. Similarly, the genocide that happened in Rwanda in the 90s testifies to a serious ethnic division between Tutsis and Hutus. Ethnic and religious grievances are undeniably sources of insecurity, at least in weak and failed African states.

Moreover, physical geography can aggravate a situation making it a factor in the stability or instability of a regime or nation. When the span of weak and/or failed states' territory is big, domestic insecurity is usually higher in peripheral regions where state power is frequently absent, or at least weak. Indeed, security forces usually concentrate around the centers of power in order to protect the vital resources and institutions of the government. The absence or insufficiency of security forces in other areas creates power vacuums that criminal organizations can easily exploit, especially during crises.

Such a situation happened, for example, in Waziristan when Afghan Taliban forces, fleeing NATO and coalition troops, sought to take refuge in this area of historically little Pakistani governmental control. Today, these same Taliban challenge the central power in Pakistan. Remote rugged terrain in the Pakistani Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) also hinders the application of state authority by providing criminals with havens that law enforcement forces struggle to reach, illustrating the security challenges for weak and failed states whose police means are limited. In short, distance and terrain configuration aggravate the risk of insecurity.

Political geography is also a factor of insecurity. Political geography has two dimensions: internal and external. The internal political geography of a state concerns the number of ethnicities or religious groups living within its borders. Internal political geography is a major concern for former European colonies. Africa provides many examples. When they rushed to Africa in the 1800s, colonial powers rapidly divided Africa into arbitrary regions, corresponding to their conquests, rather than the reality of the political and social terrain. The Berlin conference in 1884-1885 decided of the

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[26] "Six Clés Pour Comprendre Le Conflit En République Centrafricaine," *LeMonde.fr*, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/12/05/republique-centrafricaine-le-conflit-en-six-points_3526169_3212.html (accessed 22 January, 2014).

boundaries in Africa with regard to colonial powers interests. These colonizing nations created boundaries in order to promote their interests at the expense of the indigenous populations. They made these boundaries, either by regrouping ethnicities inside the same country, or by dispersing them across the newly established states. Concentrating ethnic groups with long histories of conflicts within the same administrative entity became a source of conflict and thus instability.[27]

Indeed, the aim of the Berlin conference was to reduce the risk of conflicts among European powers over colonial possessions, rather than to promote future development in the region. These new borders demonstrate a lack of concern for ethnic homelands. When decolonization started, the problem of ethnicity could have been resolved by redrawing the African borders. However, African leadership in the form of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the international leadership from the UN decided to defend the colonially drawn borders in order to avoid African interstate conflicts.[28] The resulting problem was to build nation states from the different ethnicities living within these arbitrary borders. Nation building is not a simple process among multiple ethnicities, as the multitude of ethnic and intra-communal conflicts in Africa testifies. Thus, internal political geography may be the source of significant insecurity.

The second dimension of political geography—the external one—refers to the political environment made of the surrounding countries of a weak or failed state. Neighboring countries can become an external factor of insecurity. Indeed, because those neighboring states may also be unable to secure their periphery, a power vacuum spreads over several countries, which increases by the way the difficulty for a given state to implement security.

For example, southern Algeria has long been a sanctuary for Islamist groups enjoying the large, ungoverned desert zones of Sahel that spread across Mauritania, Mali,

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[27] Brent Bankus*, et al.*, "Understanding Africa: A Geographic Approach," (2009), 182.
[28] Secretary-General, "Resolutions Adopted By the First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments Held in Cairo, Uar, From 17 to 21 July 1964" (Paper presented at the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments, Cairo, 17 July 1964), 16.

Niger, Chad and Libya.[29] It becomes easy for illicit groups to avoid law enforcement forces by escaping into the uncontrolled area of the neighboring country. In this way, political geography can also foster insecurity. Therefore, it appears that ethnic and religious grievances in weak and failed African states directly hamper the state from providing security, and that geography, whether it is physical or political, is an aggravating factor contributing to insecurity.

The fostering conditions of the general feeling of injustice

In his book *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Samuel Huntington studied, among other things, the relation between state modernization and instability. He described modernization as the change from a traditional political model—based on group affiliations such as tribal, ethnic, or religious affiliations—to a modern one. He concluded that while modernity was often synonymous with stability, the process of modernization was synonymous of instability.[30] Social, economic, and cultural evolution characterizes this modernization, but it rarely involves movement toward a modern political system.[31] Thus, in modernizing states, traditional politics endure even when social, economic, and cultural changes occur. Because of the traditional political system, benefits of those changes often go to the people who govern the country and to their respective groups. Whether it is a ruling majority or ruling minority, inequality appears because the traditional system encourages ruling classes to give preference to their social groups.[32] Weak and failed states in Africa are particular cases of the modernizing states described by Huntington. They are also states with endemic inequalities. They are states in which rulers often look for personal or group development instead of the development of the whole population.

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[29] European External Action Service, "Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel," http://www.eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf (accessed 22 January, 2014), 3.

[30] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 39-43.

[31] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 35; Buzan, and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security (Cambridge Studies in International Relations)*, 220.

[32] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 56-59.

Yet inequality by itself is not a source of feelings of injustice if the population wholly accepts it as a normal pattern of life, as it is in many traditional political systems. The problem comes from the fact that modernizing states—weak and failed states in our case—mix a traditional system and socio-economic development. This socio-economic development gives birth to aspirations among the rest of the society, not only among the ruling part. Nevertheless, due to the persistence of the traditional political system, the ability of the people to see their aspirations fulfilled can be thwarted, which creates frustration and dissatisfaction.[33]

In Africa, the induced inequality is of two sorts: political and economic. First, group preference and the poor institutionalization in weak and failed African states create political inequality. One can indeed consider weak and failed African states as poorly institutionalized because their bureaucracy cannot work independently from the ruler and his will.[34] Indeed, in order to ensure their political survival and keep control of their country, rulers of weak states often implement a system of governance in which they control all the organs and agencies of the state.[35] This politics of survival consist in consistently hampering the capability of the state bureaucracy to develop a counter power. To that end, the strong man makes sure that he always keep control of the appointment system, which allows him to replace any dissident when necessary. Conversely, he retains the ability to appoint anyone who shows personal loyalty.[36]

In her study of the bureaucracy of Mexico, Merilee Grindle stated, "The ambitious and the insecure in both politics and bureaucracy tend to seek personal vertical attachments, for it is on individuals, not policy, ideology, or party loyalty, that their futures depend."[37] In such countries, to which most of sub-Saharan states belong, only the people with the approved background and ties are eligible for political enfranchisement. Such political conditions often generate injustice because other factions of the population are at disadvantage.

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[33] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 53-54.
[34] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 25-28.
[35] Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States* (Princeton University Press, 1988), 206-13.
[36] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 214-26.

Economic inequality is often due to the traditional political systems that endure despite socio-economic evolution. In such systems, those who generally command the income distribution also usually command the government. Indeed, in traditional systems of limited socio-economic development, authority usually rests on ascribed and inherited status, which explains the longevity in power of certain African rulers.[38] These limitations help to explain why, in traditional systems, the population generally accepts income inequality as part of the pattern of life.

Huntington's modernization theory puts in evidence another problematic aspect of weak and failed African states: the coexistence of the traditional political system with social, economic, and cultural development initiated by colonization and decolonization. Once exposed to the modernity of colonial powers, those countries were disturbed in their traditional patterns of life. Bombarded with new and better ways of producing economic goods and services, expectations rose within the population.[39] Indeed, in the mid-nineteenth century, African countries endured tremendous pressures from the European colonizers who dominated of the world market. As a result, the old economic standards of African states were simply destroyed by the colonizing powers.[40]

Yet even as European powers did not mind modernizing the economic structure African colonies by destroying the old economic standards, they were not willing to modernize the traditional political systems that allowed them to maintain their political superiority.[41] This situation was a win-win opportunity for both Europeans and African rulers. Europeans maintained their superiority while a few Africans enjoyed the gains of socio-economic development and many others received lesser gains—even losses sometimes.[42] The incompatibility of the traditional system inequalities with rising expectations became the source of feelings of injustice, and thus of instability.[43]

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[37] Merilee S. Grindle, *Bureaucrats, Politicians, and Peasants in Mexico: A Case Study in Public Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 49-50.
[38] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 39.
[39] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 46.
[40] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 140.
[41] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 141.
[42] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 57.
[43] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 57.

It is a common belief that inequality creates disaffection such as that experienced during the recent unrest in northern African states and the Middle East. To illustrate this belief, a quantitative approach of the relation between inequality and instability is possible through a correlating factor such as economic growth. Indeed, economic inequality hampers economic growth; and declining growth often precipitates more political instability.

Thus, on the one hand, Berg and Ostry established in one of their studies for the International Monetary Fund that inequality hampers economic growth.[44] Through survival analysis and regression methodology, they studied the duration of economic growth between downturns and upturns of the economy that occurred between 1950 and 2003. They referred to these periods as growth spells. Based on economic literature, they identified eight different factors capable of influencing the duration of these growth spells.[45] For each parameter, they established a corresponding hazard rate—conditional probability that the spell will end in the following period. This hazard rate provided a computed hazard ratio that indicated the factor by which the hazard rate increased when the factor increased by one unit. For example, a hazard ratio of 1.1 indicated that the risk of a growth down break due to this parameter increased by 10 percent. A hazard ratio of 1 meant that there was no effect, and a hazard ration less than 1 denoted a "protective effect."[46]

When they merged all the indicators, their model provided the following table. The first line indicates the hazard ratio and the second line the probability for the corresponding ratio to equal 1.

Model Variable	5 year minimum spell		8 year minimum spell	
	$p_{BR} = 0.1$	$p_{BR} = 0.25$	$p_{BR} = 0.1$	$p_{BR} = 0.25$
1 Log (1+inflation) (change within spell)	1.007	1.005	1.067	0.999
	1.2E-01	1.8E-01	1.4E-01	7.2E-01
Inequality (Gini Coefficient)	1.139	1.032	1.191	1.075
	1.4E-04	8.9E-02	1.9E-02	1.5E-02
Autocracy score (0-10 point scale)	1.081	1.089	1.302	1.148
	3.9E-01	1.0E-01	4.9E-02	1.4E-01
Trade Liberalization (0-1 dummy)	0.863	0.456	0.527	0.175
	8.1E-01	4.8E-02	4.3E-01	3.3E-03
Overvaluation (change within spell)	1.004	1.010	1.013	1.019
	7.0E-01	3.4E-02	1.2E-01	3.8E-03
Terms of Trade Change (percent)	0.96	0.98	0.96	1.02
	8.3E-02	1.2E-01	1.5E-01	1.9E-01
U.S. Interest Rate Change (points)	1.35	1.36	1.15	1.42
	6.9E-02	5.1E-03	5.9E-01	2.5E-02
Initial Income Per Capita (in thousands)	1.04	1.07	1.71	1.15
	8.1E-01	6.5E-02	4.8E-03	1.6E-01

Figure 2: Summary Regressions
Source: Berg, Ostry, and Zettelmeyer, "What Makes Growth Sustained?", 28.

This table shows that among all the internal factors influencing economic growth, inequality is strikingly the most important one. For example, if one considers a five-year minimum spell at the 0.1 significance level, an increase of inequality—here measured with the GINI index—by 1 unit would increase the risk of a growth down break by 13.9 percent, and by 19.1 percent when considering a 8 year minimum spell.

The chart below, deduced from their study, summarizes the relation between sustainable growth and inequality. As a general tendency, the more inequality increases, the shorter is the economic growth duration is.
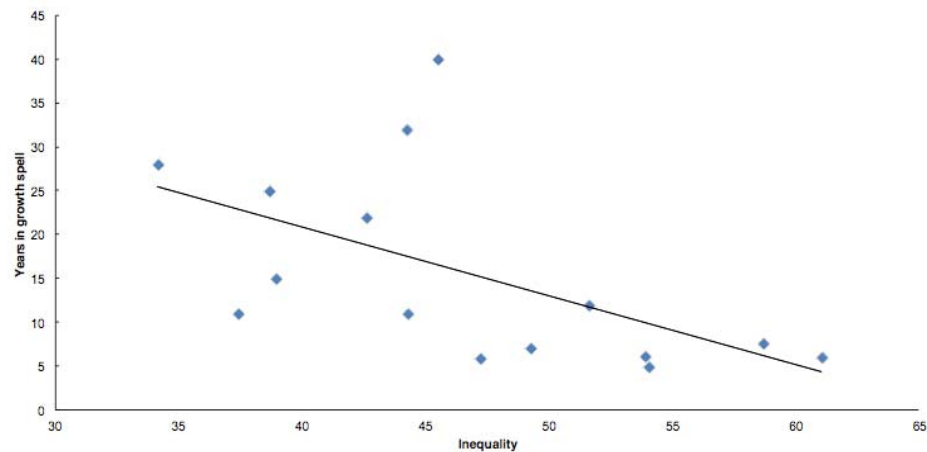
Source: Penn World Tables and Wider World Income Inequality Database.
Note: This figure includes spells that end in-sample (completed spells) only, because the length of incomplete spells is unknown. For this figure, minimum spell length is five years.

Figure 3: Years In Growth Spell and Inequality
Source: Jonathan David Ostry, and Andrew Berg, *Inequality and Unsustainable Growth: Two Sides of the Same Coin?*, vol. 11/08 (International Monetary Fund, 2011), 9.

The importance of inequality is visually more appreciable in the following chart, which Berg et al. obtained by increasing each variable, one at a time, keeping the others constant. This chart shows that economic inequality is the most influential determinant of economic growth, producing an increase of almost 50% in the duration of economic growth for a decrease of inequality of only 10%. According to the authors, the difference of impact with trade openness would be even more important if one took out of the equation the Asian countries whose growth was mostly based on trade at the time of the study.

Sources: Berg, Ostry, and Zettelmeyer (2008) and authors' calculations.
Note: For each variable, the height of the figure shows the percentage increase in spell duration resulting from an increase in that variable from the 50th to the 60th percentile, with other variables at the 50th percentile. For trade, the figure shows the benefits of having an open instead of a closed regime, using the Wacziarg and Welch (2008) dichotomous variable. For autocracy, the figure shows the effects of a move from a rating of 1 (the 50th percentile) to 0 (the 73rd percentile.)

Figure 4: Change in Expected Growth Duration
Source: Ostry, and Berg, *Inequality and Unsustainable Growth: Two Sides of the Same Coin?*, 12.

Thus, inequality is an important factor of an economic downturn. On the other hand, economic growth and the capability of countries to provide political goods to their citizens, which fosters stability, are intimately related. In fact, without the financial benefits of economic growth, countries would be unable to provide such goods. This does not mean that politicians would not have to make difficult political choices, but economic growth greatly facilitates these choices. Access to quality education for all is one of those goods dependent on economic growth. To be more precise, the relation between the two notions goes in both ways.

On one side, equal opportunities for people to enroll in education programs increases competitiveness and productivity. Competitiveness and productivity are necessary, on the one hand, for developed countries to remain relevant in our increasingly globalized world, and, on the other hand, for the growth and development of developing countries attempting to catch up with the rest of the world. The second aspect of this relation is more of interest for the present study.

Thus, on the other side, the benefits of sustained economic growth allow countries to invest in the education's work force and infrastructure required in order to give access to education to the widest part possible of the population. Unfortunately, experience shows that in absence of economic growth, governments tend to cut funding for

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education programs. For instance, the 2008 economic crisis drove governments toward fiscal austerity. Many of them, cut education budgets under the pressure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—driven by Washington consensus policies—to reduce their fiscal deficits. Indeed, to do so, IMF dependent countries have focused on fiscal and monetary policies "that have prioritized fiscal balance and low inflation in the constant short-term to the neglect or subordination of the public investment necessary for longer-term developmental goals such as increased employment, tax-revenue generation and investments in the underlying infrastructure, including the education infrastructure."[47]

Without an adequate amount of infrastructure and teachers, education remains accessible only to those who can afford it. Accordingly, a recent report of the UNESCO established that, "educational inequalities significantly heightened the risk of conflict."[48] Indeed, unequal educational opportunities often imply other social inequalities and injustices, such as those in job and personal-development opportunities. For example, in Indonesia's Aceh province, perceived injustices over the sharing of benefits from a booming gas and oil industry fueled a violent separatist struggle. When the province's wealth began to grow, the jobs created tended to go to the more educated Javanese migrants, rather than to the Acehnese locals. In a 1976 statement, the Free Aceh Movement declared that the central government and Javanese migrants had robbed them of their livelihood and abused the education of their children.[49] Thus, the absence of economic growth contributes to unequal education opportunities, which in return contributes to a general sense of injustice. Thus, the absence of economic growth fosters the general sense of injustice. One can therefore conclude that inequality fosters the general sense of injustice, which increases instability.

In sum, this section has demonstrated that in weak and failed African states, the general sense of injustice may find its source in two different conditions: 1) ethnicity and/or religious affiliation and 2) economic disenfranchisement. Indeed, ethnic and/or

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[47] Rick Rowden, "Impacts of Imf Policies on National Education Budgets and Teachers," (2011), 13.

[48] Unesco, *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education.* (Paris: UNESCO, 2011), 166.

religious affiliation is the base of a traditional system of governing that conflicts with the expectations brought about in the modernizing societies of weak and failed states. This disequilibrium between politics and expectations is a source of instability. Similarly, economic disenfranchisement is source of a general sense of injustice because only a few get the benefits of the countries' economy. In return, this sense of injustice stimulates instability. This being established, we now turn to the factors degrading government legitimacy.

Factors hampering the legitimacy of the government

In modern western democracies' views, legitimacy of the government may appear to be directly influenced by its capability to provide security and to establish a general sense of justice among its citizens. In the African context however, the traditional system of governance has also an important influence, one that is predominantly negative. Huntington described this influence in 1969 and contemporary studies reemphasize the importance of this traditional system with regard to African states, which are ruled more by commerce than by bureaucracies. Thus, Buzan and Wæver noticed that, in traditional politics, the political and command authority over resources is primarily based on individuals who serve personal or social-group interests, rather than the national ones. They further argue that there is often a real divorce between regimes and their citizens.[50] Such a divorce rids the government of its legitimacy.

I will study Mali with its Tuareg minority as an example of such delegitimization. After obtaining independence from France in 1960, the Tuaregs became dissatisfied with the Mali government. This minority group noticed that the government drew most of the post-colonial leadership of Mali from southern ethnic groups not sympathetic to the pastoral culture of the Tuareg nomads. Tuaregs were also afraid of the new land reform that threatened their privileges in terms of access to agricultural products. Feeling misrepresented and denigrated, Tuaregs thought that the government sought to destroy

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[49] Unesco, *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education*, 166.
[50] Buzan, and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security (Cambridge Studies in International Relations)*, 225.

the Tuareg culture. Consequently, they took up arms for their first rebellion in 1962, which ended in a blood bath for the Tuaregs.[51] Thus, consciously, or not, the Mali government segregated the Tuareg minority. Ignoring their claims as a minority delegitimized the Mali government in the eyes of the Tuaregs who decided to secede to preserve their culture. Thus, ethnic preferences came into play in delegitimizing the government, which caused unrest.

All of this was exacerbated by corruption. It might be presumptuous to say that corruption is necessarily delegitimizing to all governments. Examining corruption as a potential factor, one finds that the 2013 Corruption perceptions index shows that 90% of African states experienced serious corruption problems.[52] In an interesting study about the risks of corruption Sarah Dix, Karen Hussman, and Grant Walton examined how corruption damages the governmental legitimacy. Based on the study of fragile states, they concluded that asserting that corruption always delegitimizes governments is a flawed generalization.[53]

Corruption becomes a problem only when it reallocates resources in a way that is exclusionary and/or allows armed and organized crime groups to infiltrate the state or increase their resources.[54] Thus, we must take with caution the idea that corruption hampers legitimacy. For example in fragile states recovering from conflict, corruption of former warlords, combatants or elites can be a incentivizing means used to reinforce the power of the central government and enhance stability.[55]

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[51] Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali," http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/lps12312/carlisle-www.army.mil/usassi/ssipubs/pubs98/tuareg/tuareg.pdf (accessed 28 févr., 2014), 10.

[52] Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2013 - Brochure," (Transparency International), 4.

[53] Sarah Dix, Karen Hussman, and Grant Walton, "Risks of Corruption to State Legitimacy and Stability in Fragile Situations," http://issuu.com/cmi-norway/docs/u4-issue-2012-03-risks-of-corruption?e=0 (accessed 15 December, 2013).

[54] Dix, Hussman, and Walton, "Risks of Corruption to State Legitimacy and Stability in Fragile Situations," x.

[55] Kwabena Gyimah-Brempong, "Corruption, Economic Growth, and Income Inequality in Africa," *Economics of Governance* 3 (2002), 207; Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 61; Dix, Hussman, and Walton, "Risks of Corruption to State Legitimacy and Stability in Fragile Situations," vii.

Furthermore, Dix et al.'s report suggests that not only specific corruption can delegitimize a government, but also anti-corruption measures that do not bring the results promised by politicians. The inability to meet the expectations that the population puts in these promises delegitimizes the government in the views of both elites and citizens. Either a government is unable to implement the rule of law on its territory, or it is convenient for its official, personally, not to do so.

In sum, this section has demonstrated that the capability of the government to provide political goods such as security and general sense of justice affects its legitimacy. It has also shown that its capability to ensure an equitable distribution of resources among the people, by mitigating self or group-interested corruption, contributes to conditions supporting its legitimacy.

Linking factors of instability to terrorism

This chapter has highlighted the link between terrorism and instability, as well as the link between instability and weak and failed states. By examining three main features of weak and failed states in the specific context of Africa, three conditions appear necessary, if not necessary and sufficient by themselves, to facilitate the development of terrorist activities: ethnic grievances, religious grievances, and economic disenfranchisement.

Indeed, terrorist organizations enjoy taking advantage of public discontent to foster their objectives. Ethnic grievances offer an easy way for a terrorist organization to develop its activities in a country where a minority is persecuted by the government. It can find shelter among that population in exchange for the conduct of terrorist actions against the government. Religious grievances are also favorable to such a development especially when considering Islamic terrorism. Islamic terrorists consider it their duty to protect the community of believers from the perversion of other religions.[56]

Prosperity inequalities are also a fertile ground for terrorist groups with enough funding to offer alternatives to the options provided by the government. Delivering goods that the state cannot or does not provide to a part of the population is a key tool terrorists

groups use to increase their influence among the people. This situation, when it occurs, does not necessarily imply that the population will turn into terrorists.

However, support of the population can help terrorist groups, so that the people tolerate or even appreciate the terrorist alternative to their government. This possibility is all the more important to understand because one of the basics of counter-terrorism operations is to be able to discriminate between terrorists and civilians.[57] In such cases, well-funded terrorists groups have significant tools with which to foster their control on the population.[58]

Regarding now the three aggravating factors—geography, colonial legacy, and corruption—it is possible to understand their implication on African weak and failed states. Physical geography adds some challenges to already over-extended governments in terms of providing security. Terrorist groups that seek to install their rule over certain areas of the country know how to take advantage of power vacuums, as Al-Qaeda and its affiliates demonstrated in the unruled areas of Pakistan. The lack of influence of the central government in remote areas facilitates the spread of a terrorist group's influence. External political geography facilitates intra-regional movements of those groups while internal geography—borders drawing—exacerbates the social groups tensions described above.

Colonial legacy, beyond the border drawing aspect, may also increase the effect of social groups grievances because of the policies that the colonial powers applied during their rule. Many colonial authorities decided to divide indigenous populations in order to rule them. These ethnic or religious preferences provided another dimension to group grievances in countries where it happened.

Finally, corruption aggravates the effect of economic disenfranchisement by reallocating resources to a selected part of the population, exacerbating thus social

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[56] Seyyid Qutb, *Milestones*, 1 ed., (Dar al-Ilm, 2007).

[57] Scott Atran, *Talking to the Enemy: Religion, Brotherhood, and the (Un)making of Terrorists*, Reprint ed., (Ecco, 2011); John Mackinlay, *Insurgent Archipelago*, Reprint ed., (Oxford University Press, USA, 2012), 148; Mark Mazzetti, *The Way of the Knife: The Cia, a Secret Army, and a War At the Ends of the Earth*, 0 ed., (Penguin Press HC, The, 2013), 85.

[58] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)*, 145.

grievances. Moreover, corruption provides also a way for terrorist groups to buy the indifference of government officials regarding illegal activities that help finance their operations. This indifference degrades the security environment.

Chapter 3 - Precolonial Mali

This chapter deals precolonial Mali. This period goes from the ninth century to the eighteenth century. Historically, we can divide it into two parts. The first spreads from the creation to the decline of the empires of Ghana and Mali. The second is the period of chaos that followed the fall of the empire of Mali until the arrival of the first colonial troops. One could compare this period to the Warring States period in China, which was not favorable for governance. Thus, this chapter focuses mostly on the imperial time.

The imperial period of Mali presents an interesting feature with regard to instability and governance, the relative stability of the region during that period. By examining the imperial period in detail, we get the opportunity to understand how the ancient rulers of Mali preserved the peace and stability of their empire. The conclusions at the end of this chapter will be useful for the comparative analysis at the end of our study. We will examine how the emperors of Mali managed to deal with ethnicity, religion, and economic matters in order to keep the cohesion of their empire. To set the stage of this analysis, we first turn to a quick historical review of precolonial Mali.

Historical background

In precolonial Africa, empires and kingdoms did not have the same meaning as they had in western societies. While land possession and drawn borders physically defined empires and kingdoms in medieval Europe, peoples and their locations were their determinants in medieval western Africa. In other words, land possession was not the essential characteristic of power in western Africa. Such a difference in power definition is easily understandable because African villages had to move often due to the poverty of the soil. Thus, one must understand African empires and kingdoms of the precolonial era as groups of people under the influence and control—more or less violent—of one single emperor or king.[1] This king was, however, far from having absolute powers over his

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[1] Académie de Strasbourg, "Les Royaumes Africains Médiévaux," http://www.ac-strasbourg.fr/fileadmin/pedagogie/histoiregeographie/Se_former/Nouveaux_programmes

subjects. Power was usually highly decentralized to regional rulers because, the king/emperor had to respect traditions and oral laws in order to keep people supportive and tied to the throne.[2]

Moreover, to consider precolonial Mali, as we know it today, may be quite confusing because the contemporary geographical limits do not correspond to the ancient limits of the empire of Mali.[3] Mali started as a chiefdom, expanded to a kingdom, and became an empire under the leadership of Soundjata Keita. It was the dominant force in West Africa between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.[4]
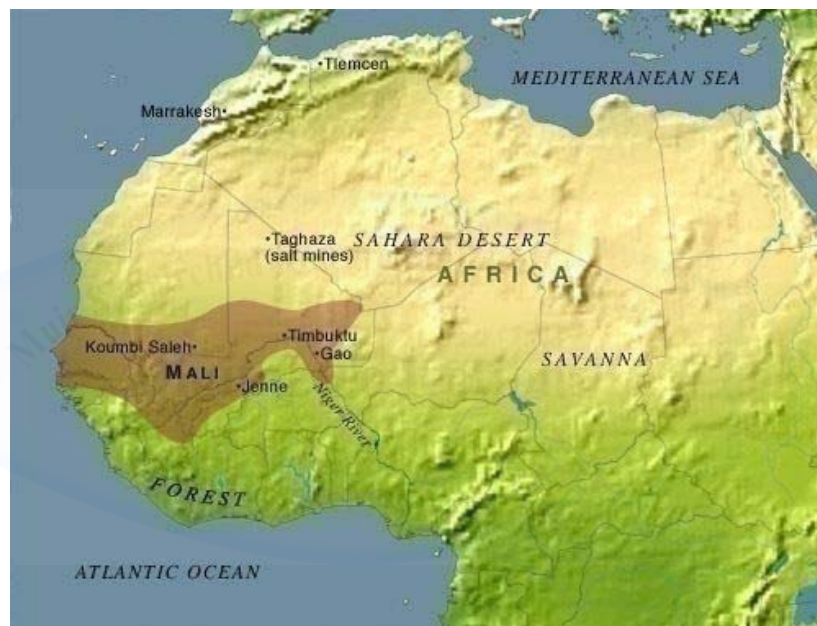
Figure 5: Mali Empire (Ca. 1200)
Source: "Mali Empire (Ca. 1200-)," http://www.blackpast.org/gah/mali-empire-ca-1200 (accessed 28 Feb., 2014).

As shown in Figure 5, ancient Mali covered the southern part of the present Mali and extended west to the Atlantic Ocean. Old Mali ruled over a vast territory, extending into today's Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea in the south; Burkina Faso and Niger in the east;

_de_5e/Royaumes_africains/Les_royaumes_africains__accompagnement_de_la_presenta tio.pdf (accessed 15 November, 2013), 1.

[2] Académie de Strasbourg, "Les Royaumes Africains Médiévaux," 1.

[3] see Figure 5

[4] R. James Bingen, David Robinson, and John M. Staatz, *Democracy and Development in Mali*, 1 ed., (Michigan State University Press, 2000), 9.

and Senegal, Gambia, and Mauritania in the west. One has to consider Mali as a human entity, not a physical one. Malian people belong to the *Mandinke* ethnic group, which literally means in N'Ko language "people of Manden."[5] However, Manden did not host only the *Mandinke*. It also hosted several other ethnic groups such as the Soninke, Bambara, and Malinke. Manden was the region spreading from Timbuktu to the savanna plateau of actual western Sudan.[6]

Understanding how the empire of Mali formed in the thirteenth century requires a brief review of the history of the early rulers of the region. The history of African civilizations before the eighth century is quite difficult to verify because the people at that time based their history on oral tradition. It is only after the eighth century that written references of Sub-Saharan history started to appear. This was when the Arabs who ruled on the northern shores of Africa started colonizing the Saharan region. The first trans-Saharan caravans managed to reach the banks of the Niger River near Timbuktu and Gao and started trading with the people of Manden. At that time, the kingdom of Ghana ruled Manden and did so until the eleventh century.[7] Most of the exchanges between the Arabs and the *Mandinke* were possible because of Mali's gold, which was the most valuable good of the region, providing the basis of to commerce with foreign traders.

The Wangara region, south of the kingdom of Ghana, produced most of West Africa gold. This gold had to transit through Ghana before crossing the Sahara to facilitate trade with the Muslims living in the Mediterranean regions. Thus, even if Ghana did not control gold production, its central position between producers and consumers allowed it to set the prices of gold and tariffs. As shown in Figure 6, Ghana enjoyed a strategic position at the crossroads of the trans-Saharan commerce routes and the gold-bearing areas of the Niger River region.

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[5] "N'Ko Language - Tutorial," http://www.fakoli.net/nko/tutorial/intro.html (accessed 24 févr., 2014).
[6] "Mande (People) — Encyclopedia Britannica," http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/361625/Mande (accessed 24 févr., 2014).
[7] Ancient Ghana was then about 1000 km north of the actual Ghana.

Figure 6: Trans-Saharan Trade Routes
Source: "The Trans-Saharan Trade Route,"
https://ridgeaphistory.wikispaces.com/s/blank.html (accessed 28 Feb., 2014).

Such a dominant position in the organization of the commerce of gold at the end of the eleventh century spurred the covetousness of the neighboring Berbers, on the northern limits of the Sahara desert.[8]

At the end of the eleventh century, under the pressure of the Berbers of the Almoravids dynasty, the kingdom of Ghana withdrew from its northern possessions— contemporaneous northern Mali—toward the southern shores of the Niger River, where it slowly declined in favor of the kingdom of Soso. The king of Soso, Soumaworo Kante, who initially came to Manden in order to help Ghana against the Berbers, received a very cold welcome from the *Mandinke*, who refused Kante's help because they felt that the Soso king was not from a sufficiently noble lineage. Outraged, he exploited the Berbers' military successes to take control of the Manden people and their treasure. To avoid defeat by the more numerous people of Manden, the Soso kingdom deported and

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[8] Académie de Strasbourg, "Les Royaumes Africains Médiévaux," 9.

enslaved the *Mandinke*.[9] The Soso Kingdom dominated the people of Manden until the end of the thirteenth century.

After almost a century of slavery, the people of Manden gathered behind a young leader, Soundjata Keita, who promised to abolish slavery in Manden if people would help him to topple Soumaworo Kante.[10] In 1235, Keita defeated Kante and became *mansa* (which means great king) of the new Kingdom of Mali. At that time, about 30 tribal kings were ruling the *Mandinke*, but they had been unable to defeat Kante individually. Therefore, they all agreed to abdicate in favor of Keita, who succeeded where they failed.[11] In return, Keita proposed a clear and simple deal to the *Mandinke*: freedom for all; unity and solidarity; mutual respect; greatness of Manden; work, action, and probity. By proposing this social contract, Keita established the first unifying pillar of the Malian nation that he envisioned.

Furthermore, he insisted on a federal character for the new empire of Mali. He did not want power to be in the hands of an absolute ruler. He advocated decisions being made through consultation within the Manden council, which gathered all the tribal leaders of Manden. This council was a vehicle with which to show consideration for the individual preferences of each tribe composing his empire. He also sought to create a true national identity by asking all moral, religious, and clan authorities to support the nation's cause.[12] Thus, by showing consideration for common moral values and individual preferences, Keita reinforced his legitimacy as the ruler of the peoples of Manden.

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[9] Youssouf Tata Cissé, and Wâ Kamissoko, *La Grande Geste Du Mali, Des Origines À La Fondation De L'Empire*, 2e édition ed., (Karthala, 2000), 193.

[10] One must understand abolition of slavery with regard of the people of *Manden.* Like in Ancient Greece, not everyone was considered a citizen of *Manden*. The abolition of slavery applied only to indigenous people and those who agreed to swear allegiance to the king. In medieval Africa, slavery remained an important aspect of trans-Saharan commerce. François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, Bertrand Hirsch, and Marie-Laure Derat, "L'Age D'or De L'Afrique," *L'Histoire* 367 (2011), 43.

[11] Cissé, and Kamissoko, *La Grande Geste Du Mali, Des Origines À La Fondation De L'Empire*, 211.

[12] Youssouf Tata Cissé, and Wâ Kamissoko, *Soundjata La Gloire Du Mali. La Grande Geste Du Mali - Tome 2* (Karthala, 2009), 28-29.

Keita also established a system of representatives to ensure application of the rules issued by the central power, while respecting local customs. He ordered the creation of village militias, which he could call to join the country's army when necessary.[13] In other words, he established federal governance. Seven years after his victory against Kante, Keita had succeeded in making of Mali a stable country to which citizens were proud to belong.[14] Furthermore, he learnt several tribal languages in order to interact directly with those tribes. Moreover, he always dealt out justice in the presence of the Manden council representatives of the disputing parties involved, in order to take into account the customs of each region.[15]

From 1360 onward, the Mali Empire started to decline until its disappearance in the mid-sixteenth century. However, the Keita dynasty, which ruled without interruption until 1389, achieved an unprecedented unity of the ethnicities living in the region.[16] This slow death of the empire resulted from succession struggles among the ruling families of Mali. The succession of legitimate kings overturned by usurpers slowly decreased the credibility and legitimacy of the central government. As a consequence, peripheral tribes of the empire started to rebel against the *mansas* of Mali. Songhai is one of these peripheral kingdoms that eventually took over the Mali Empire's possessions and become an even larger empire.[17]

This short historical review has put into perspective important elements with regard to this study. First, in terms of administration, the Keita dynasty implemented federalism. The result, decentralization, prevented ethnic clashes among the peoples living under Mali rule. Second, religion also had a unifying effect because it provided a solid judicial base that did not advantage one ethnicity over another. With regard to

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[13] Cissé, and Kamissoko, *Soundjata La Gloire Du Mali. La Grande Geste Du Mali - Tome 2*, 36.

[14] Cissé, and Kamissoko, *Soundjata La Gloire Du Mali. La Grande Geste Du Mali - Tome 2*, 48.

[15] Cissé, and Kamissoko, *Soundjata La Gloire Du Mali. La Grande Geste Du Mali - Tome 2*, 56; D.T. Niane, *General History of Africa - Africa From the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 4 (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984), 160.

[16] Nehemia Levtzion, "The Thirteenth-and Fourteenth-Century Kings of Mali," *Journal of African History* 4, no. 3 (1963), 352-53.

economy, the empire of Mali became one of the wealthiest of the region thanks to its gold production. Even if the ruling classes kept most of the precious metal production, they found ways to compensate local populations. We will examine further these aspects in the following paragraphs.

How the Mali Empire Dealt with Ethnicity

Despite numerous ethnicities living under its authority, the Mali Empire remained a stable state as long as the ruling class was able to maintain credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens or vassals. For more than a hundred years, the *mansas* of Mali managed to keep the various ethnicities together. Many different tribes composed the empire of Mali and lived peacefully together under the ruling of a single *mansa*.[18] The Keita dynasty, which started with Soundjata Keita in 1255, federated all these tribes under the banner of the Mali Empire. The kings of that dynasty understood the advantages of decentralization in ruling over so many ethnicities.

Ruling multiple ethnicities is not a simple matter. However, the *mansas* of Mali managed to did it by improving the system of the their predecessor, the Kingdom of Ghana. Ghana had already federated the different tribes living within its area of influence by implementing a feudal system of allegiance to a strong central government. Soundjata Keita, founder of the Mali dynasty, used the model of Ghana to build a strong base for his new empire, but he also started to introduce decentralization, which his son fully implemented.[19] Being enslaved for a long time under the Soso kingdom, Keita and his successors understood how important were the grievances felt by people whose identity was too often denied under Soso rule. Soundjata Keita began to ameliorate these injustices by abolishing slavery in Manden. Then, he advantageously used

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[17] Levtzion, "The Thirteenth-and Fourteenth-Century Kings of Mali," 350-51.

[18] In the north, there were Saharan nomads (Mesufa, Berber, Tuareg) and Sahelian nomads (Fulb and Peul). In the south, there were farmers (Tukuloor, Soninke, Songhai, Wolof and Mandingo).

[19] Koufecou A. Traore, "Comment L'empire Du Mali Au 12ème Siècle Articulait Les Échelles De Gouvernance," http://base.afrique-gouvernance.net/fr/corpus_dph/fiche-dph-340.html (accessed 23 févr., 2014).

decentralization to mitigate ethnic grievances. Thus, Soundjata Keita implemented social reforms aiming at socially enfranchising the people living in his empire.

Furthermore, Keita used decentralization to promote the legitimacy of his rule. Indeed, decentralization consisted in giving significant autonomy to surrounding provinces, which resembles the theory of hegemonic stability developed by Ikenberry. The hegemon deliberately forgoes some prerogatives in order to increase acceptance of his hegemonic position.[20] Thus, the empire was faithful to the central government, which directly administrated the region. Surrounding this core was a belt of dependent chiefdoms administered by their traditional chiefs, who were either completely autonomous or under the supervision of an envoy from the king, called the *Farba*.

The *Farba* was a resident minister who made sure local chiefs applied federal rules, while respecting traditional ones. This minister was in charge of inaugurating local chiefs according to the customs of the region. He was also in charge of collecting taxes and gathering troops in case of war. Thus, the provinces still remained under significant control of the central government.[21] Finally, around this first belt of communities, were autonomously administered provinces that recognized however the hegemony of the *mansa*. They showed their allegiance by regularly sending tributes to the king. These communities were similar to protectorates whose fidelity to the central power was a function of the latter's rigor.[22]

In sum, ancient Mali faced the challenge of ethnic diversity. However, kings of the Mali Empire successfully prevented ethnic grievances through a federal system that promoted tolerance of the different cultures. By involving the central government in the perpetuation of local traditions, they also nurtured the idea of Malian nation. Indeed, because each ethnicity got to practice its traditions freely under the benevolent eyes of the *mansas* and their ministries, people felt accepted, which was the first step toward the

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[20] G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 58.

[21] Niane, *General History of Africa - Africa From the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, 161-64.

[22] Traore, "Comment L'empire Du Mali Au 12ème Siècle Articulait Les Échelles De Gouvernance."

sense of belonging to the Mali Empire, and thus, the Malian nation. However, that sense of belonging to something bigger than their ethnicities was not simply a by-product of tolerance. Equitable justice was also a factor that Islam provided.

Religion and its Stabilizing Effect

If one examines the relation between religion and stability in pre-colonial Mali, the empire of Mali indicates that religion was not a destabilizing factor during this period. The empire avoided religious grievances by exploiting the utilitarian aspect of Islam, rather than the ideological one. Indeed, religious allegiances in the Manden were based on political and economic interests. Politically, a non-exclusive Islam facilitated intimacy with the population and, economically, Islam opened opportunities for lucrative commerce.

Politically, the *mansas* of Mali well understood the importance of religion for their citizens and did not want to contradict or proscribe their beliefs to keep the society calm. Before the first contacts with the Arab Muslims who crossed the Sahara, sub-Saharan populations were mostly animist, their society followed traditional politics, and the ruling elders constructed their social organization around the clan.

The *mansas* of Manden understood the importance of animism for the cohesion of the people of the empire. While slowly converting to Islam, the ruling classes of Mali also embraced animist rituals. Despite the fact that most of them were Muslim, rulers required resident ministries to inaugurate local chiefs according to local traditions, even if the latter did not comply with Muslim beliefs.[23] Similarly, the Muslim *mansas* of Mali practiced royal rituals involving either traditional masks or the rituals of the mosque.[24] Sharing religious practices with the population, leaders created an intimacy between themselves and the people. This intimacy fostered significant unity within the society.

Leaders based cohabitation of both religions on the belief that the benefits of adhering to a new religion could add to the benefits that the traditional practices were

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[23] "Le Sahara, 5000 Ans De Géopolitique," *L'Histoire - Les collections* 58 (2013), 40.
[24] Fauvelle-Aymar, Hirsch, and Derat, "L'Age D'or De L'Afrique," 40.

already providing.[25] The ideological aspect of religion gave way to its utilitarian aspect, for the greater good of the community. For example, gold production in western Africa was based on animist beliefs.

Animism gave black magic properties to the precious metal and the individuals that were in charge of its exploitation, the "blacksmiths." Popular fear of the dark influence of gold in its nugget form enabled the ruling elites to ensure the control of gold shipments transiting through their region. Thus, as a pretext to protect the population from bad spirits, the ruling class retained control of gold nuggets and compensated the people for their labor.[26] Tolerance of animism and its myth about gold by the ruling classes remained necessary to keep the support and collaboration of the people who exploited gold.[27] Religious tolerance was thus a key aspect of the policy implemented by the *mansas* of Mali. In return, it ensured several centuries of prosperity for their empire.[28]

Islam also allowed the converted Mali rulers to conduct commerce with Muslim caravans transiting the Sahara. Indeed, conversion enhanced the rulers' esteem among Muslim merchants who were the most powerful economic group in the Saharan-Sahelian region. This esteem tied Mali kings "into a much wider commercial and diplomatic world than they had known before."[29] Mali kings were thus able to trade gold for goods transported by Muslims from all over the Arab world and even beyond. This commerce enhanced the prosperity and reputation of the Mali Empire.[30] Religion, which in fact facilitated commerce, had a positive influence on the stability of Mali. Indeed, while they kept a part of the gold nuggets extracted by their people for the country's reserves, Mali rulers always compensated their citizens with golden powder and other rare goods for the gold nuggets that they left in the king's care. These goods of substitution—copper and

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[25] Fauvelle-Aymar, Hirsch, and Derat, "L'Age D'or De L'Afrique," 48.

[26] Cissé, and Kamissoko, *La Grande Geste Du Mali, Des Origines À La Fondation De L'Empire*, 239.

[27] Académie de Strasbourg, "Les Royaumes Africains Médiévaux," 5.

[28] Académie de Strasbourg, "Les Royaumes Africains Médiévaux," 6.

[29] Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*, Kindle ed., (University of California Press, 2012), loc. 5787.

[30] Fauvelle-Aymar, Hirsch, and Derat, "L'Age D'or De L'Afrique," 55.

salt for example—came from the trade of gold and were greatly appreciated by the population.[31]

With time, as exchanges with Arab Muslims increased and as northern Muslims were taking over West-African kingdoms, more and more people in the region converted to Islam. In fact, beyond the economic advantages of being Muslim at that time, conversion to Islam also prevented people from being taken as slaves by Arab and Berber conquerors. This was because Islam forbids enslavement of Muslim brothers.[32]

From a judicial standpoint, in addition to the fact that the *mansas* respected each and every ethnic tradition, Islam, through Sharia Law, provided a unique standard of justice, which also helped federate tribes. Mansa Musa I, grandnephew of Soundjata Keita and fervent Muslim, introduced Sharia Law and Islamic tribunals at the beginning of the fourteenth century by bringing to Mali jurists from the Malikite school.[33] Sharia Law became the federal law by which all provinces abided. In other words, Islam became a means to control society.[34]

In sum, religions in medieval Mali were far from destabilizing. On the contrary, the *mansas* who embraced Islam showed enough pragmatism to focus more on the utilitarian aspect of religion than on its ideological aspect, to the great displeasure of Muslim historians such as Ibn Battuta.[35]

This non-exclusive approach of Islam facilitated the federation of different ethnicities with different traditions living within the empire: Saharan nomads—Mesufa, Berber, Tuareg; Sahelian nomads—Fulb, Peul; and farmers—Tukoloor, Soninke, Songhai, Wolof, and Mandingo. It also allowed the *mansas* of Mali to foster economic development through commerce with Muslim merchants. Finally, religion permitted the

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[31] D.T. Niane, *Recherches Sur L'Empire Du Mali Au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1975), 67-70; "Le Sahara, 5000 Ans De Géopolitique," 37.

[32] Fauvelle-Aymar, Hirsch, and Derat, "L'Age D'Or De L'Afrique," 49.

[33] Malikite school is one of the four schools of Islamic Law, founded by Malik ibn Anas (715-795), which has a strong emphasis on hadith. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*, loc. 5803.

[34] Académie de Strasbourg, "Les Royaumes Africains Médiévaux," 10-11.

implementation of a coherent judicial system by imposing Sharia Law as the federal law. Religion was thus a stabilizing factor in precolonial Mali.

Economic enfranchisement in the Mali Empire

As noted above, the Empire of Mali significantly benefited from its gold reserves. Indeed, when the first Muslim caravans crossed the Sahara, they opened new routes of commerce across medieval Africa. At that time, the expending Arab Empire created an ever-growing demand in the Islamic heartland for West-African gold in the form of coins and finery. This demand impelled Muslim merchants of the Maghreb and the North-Saharan regions to increase exchanges with the Mali Empire.

However, the high period of Mali came later, in the mid-thirteenth and mid-fourteenth century, when Europe was exchanging silver for gold, which became Europe's main currency. Europeans, mostly Italians and Catalan merchants, offered higher and higher prices for little bags of golden dust and nuggets. The increasing European demand added to the existing Islamic states' demand, spurring even greater gold production to the enormous advantage of Mali. At that time, West Africa was producing two-thirds of the world's gold supply.[36]

This gold production and the central place of the empire of Mali in the trans-Saharan commerce helped make this a rich and prosperous empire. However, what made the empire of Mali really successful in this endeavor was mostly its capability to manage its people's expectations. Indeed, the empire of Mali became a rich and prosperous country; however, when a country obtains high revenues, it does not always mean that its people equally benefit from this richness.

Many rulers have diverted national wealth for private interests, while their people struggled to maintain a decent level of life. One should not, however, misinterpret the Mali Empire. Even if it was stable, its leaders built it upon conquests and submission of

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[35] Ibn Battuta was a Muslim explorer from Morocco who travelled through the kingdom of Mali in the 14th century. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*, loc. 5890.

[36] Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*, loc. 5740-5763.

other people, subjugating them to one *mansa* authority. It was not an egalitarian society. Yet when considering economic enfranchisement in such a country, what matters is the fairness of this distribution, in other words, how that country was able to meet the expectations of its people. As noted in Chapter 2, the impact of economic enfranchisement enhances stability when it is correlated with the expectations of the people.

The Mali Empire managed to deal with these expectations by implementing a system of castes. Soundjata Keita, the first Mali king, was the first to implement this system. Society divided itself into in four different social classes: griots; artisans; slaves; and the aristocracy. This system has the advantage of distributing roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Indeed, the caste system is a social contract in which people belonging to a specific caste take pleasure in their social situation.[37]

In caste systems, members of a given caste do not complain about their situation, instead, they intend to live their life the best way possible because the harmony of the society is at stake if anybody tries to call into question this organization.[38] This collective myth helped Keita and his successors deal easily with wealth distribution, members of inferior castes being unable to complain, or even unwilling to complain, for the sake of their society. Nevertheless, the rulers merely had to answer the needs of the castes, the lower the caste, the lower the expectations. In that regard, the caste system participated in managing the people's expectations, as far as their economic enfranchisement was concerned.

Thus, helped by the imputed sacred character of gold in the collective consciousness, Mali officials controlled all gold resources of the empire while they were redistributing some of the benefits of gold trade to their population. These benefits were goods such as salt, copper, silver, books, paper, spices, and wheat.[39] Salt, which was

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[37] Bamba Kassimi, "Des Castes En Afrique De L'Ouest: Pour Quels Besoins ?," http://www.sedosmission.org/web/fr/?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=1713&Itemid=59&lang=en (accessed 15 Dec., 2014), 1-2.

[38] Kassimi, "Des Castes En Afrique De L'Ouest: Pour Quels Besoins ?", 3.

[39] Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*, loc. 5768.

absent from the southern shores of Western Africa until European started to commercialize sea salt in the eighteenth century, was vital for both human being and livestock.[40] Copper was a valued commodity used to forge idols for traditional ceremonies.[41] Furthermore, Mali rulers judiciously reinvested part of the commerce's benefits into public works such as social and religious structures, which added to the welfare of their citizens.[42] By answering the expectations of each caste, Mali *mansas* mitigated the destabilizing effect of economic disenfranchisement.

The Aggravating Factor of Instability in Precolonial Mali

In Chapter 2, we put into perspective aggravating factors of the instability that ethnic grievances, religious grievances, and unequal wealth repartition may provoke. These factors are geography, corruption, and colonial legacy. Even we have demonstrated that imperial Mali was relatively stable, two of these factors deserve examination. We will see that geography had a harmful effect by contributing to the downfall of the Mali Empire, while the effects of corruption were contained by superstition.

First, geography contributed to the collapse of the empire. In fact, geography facilitated the action of the hostile kingdoms that rebelled against the central authority of Mali as its power weakened during the succession struggles in the sixteenth century. At that time, the reach of the Mali Empire spanned today's Senegal, southern Mauritania, Mali, northern Burkina Faso, western Niger, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and northern Ghana. The empire of Mali reached this span by 1312, under the reign of Mansa Musa. It covered approximately 498,100 square miles (1,290,000 square kilometers).[43]

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[40] "Le Sahara, 5000 Ans De Géopolitique," 37; Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*, loc. 5771.

[41] Niane, *General History of Africa - Africa From the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, 170; Niane, *Recherches Sur L'Empire Du Mali Au Moyen Âge*, 69.

[42] "Mali Empire and Djenne Figures," http://www.nmafa.si.edu/exhibits/resources/mali/ (accessed 27 févr., 2014).
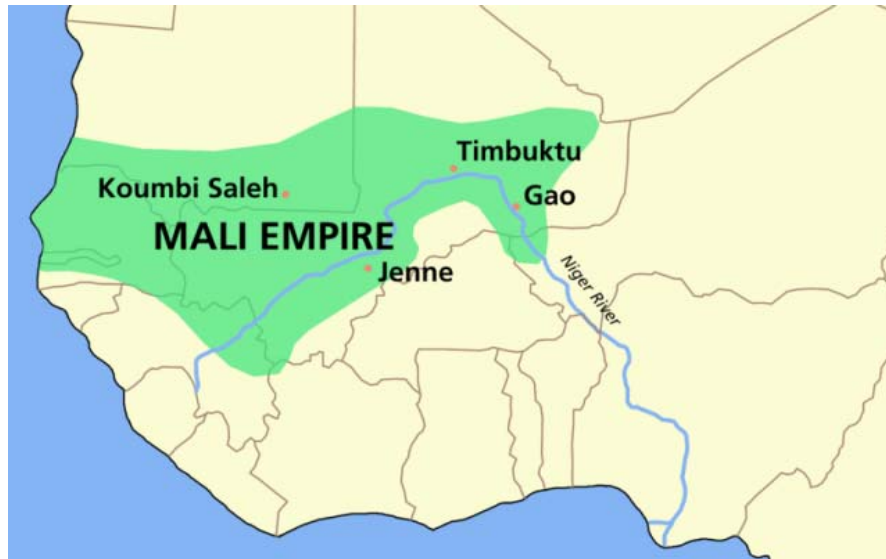
Figure 7: The Greatest Extent of the Mali Empire
Source: "How Large Was the Mali Empire At Its Greatest Extent?"

Despite the fact that the Mali *mansas* garrisoned troops in the different provinces of the empire as a police and deterrent force, they kept the bulk of the army in the principal cities of the empire located in both the core and first belt.[44] The outer belt, which included vassals kingdoms and protectorates, was thus poorly defended by the troops of the central government, whose number was estimated by Muslim merchants around 100,000 men.[45] With regard to the span of the empire and the lines of communication at that time, one would agree that it was not enough to ensure proper security. The destabilizing effect of geography is evident here. By the sixteenth century when the Mali Empire had lost its credibility in the eyes of its peripheral vassals because of never-ending succession struggles, the latter took advantage of the empire's weak defenses and influence in the periphery to attack Mali territory. In other words, they took advantage of the geographical extent of Mali and its inability to provide security over its whole territory to expedite the empire's downfall.

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[43] "How Large Was the Mali Empire At Its Greatest Extent?," http://empires.findthedata.org/q/165/2513/How-large-was-the-Mali-Empire-at-its-greatest-extent (accessed 27 févr., 2014).
[44] Niane, *General History of Africa - Africa From the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, 164.

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Now, as far as corruption in imperial Mali is concerned, we must acknowledge that resources to assess thoroughly its effects are scarce, mostly because at that time there were no written laws or justice reports. However, oral tradition indicates that the empires of West-Africa associated laws with supernatural superstitions. The direct effect was to instill fear in the subconscious of potential criminals.[46]

This observation is consistent with research conducted about the management of gold exploration and the magical properties attributed to gold. Furthermore, West-African kingdoms put heavy emphasis on accountability and good governance, which is also consistent with what we know of the political stability of Mali, at least until the sixteenth century. Thus, associated with the supernatural terms in which rulers couched laws, this fact allows one to consider that damaging corruption, as defined in chapter 2, barely existed in precolonial Mali. Thus, we can neglect the influence of corruption on the stability of precolonial Mali.

Therefore, in spite of the relative ethnic and religious stability of the Mali Empire, its geography, and more specifically its span, proved to be an important factor of in its demise in the sixteenth century. It was not the root cause of this downfall, but it complicated the situation of the Mali Empire. In addition, the soon-to-arrive colonial powers would drastically change the life of the people of Manden. Henceforth, ethnicity and economic enfranchisement would have a different impact on Mali's stability, while religion would keep its stabilizing effect. Geography, now seconded by corruption, would amplify difficulties for the rulers of Mali in the future.

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[45] Niane, *General History of Africa - Africa From the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, 164.

[46] Chika Ezeanya, "Origin of Corruption in Africa and the Way Forward," http://chikaforafrica.com/2012/08/21/origin-of-corruption-in-africa-and-the-way-forward/ (accessed Mar 25, 2014).

Chapter 4 - Colonial Mali

The Songhai Empire, born form the little kingdom of Gao, progressively took the place of the Mali Empire when the latter was in decline at the end of the fourteenth century. The Songhai Empire followed the path of success of the Mali Empire, but it also followed its example in decline. Succession wars increased the Songhai Empire's vulnerability; and at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Sultan of Morocco sent troops to conquer the lands of the Malinkes. Following the fall of the Songhai Empire, a period of chaos, characterized by looting and manhunts for slaves, occurred in the region.[1]

Arab sultans took advantage of this chaos to conquer the region. Henceforth, they would rule the Manden by establishing unstable theocratic states where Sharia law was the rule. During this timeframe, contacts with Europeans became frequent on the Atlantic side of Western Africa, especially because of the Atlantic slave commerce.

Contacts with inland populations of western Africa were, however, very limited. The first account of an inland European incursion is about the French explorer René Caillé, who traveled from the Atlantic coast toward the upper Niger River and reached Timbuktu in 1828. He was not the first European to reach the area, but he was the first to come back from there alive.[2]

After 1830, Europe experienced a strong anti-slavery movement that would become one of the important factors justifying European expansion in Africa in the 1880s. From 1884 to 1885, several European powers, the Ottoman Empire, and the United States gathered in Berlin to set the basis for what we know as the "scramble for Africa".[3] In order to gain public acceptance, the conferring powers dedicated the conference to the humanitarian aim of ending slavery in Africa.

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[1] Georges Spitz, *Le Soudan Français* (Paris: Editions Maritimes et Coloniales, 1955), 44.
[2] "Le Sahara, 5000 Ans De Géopolitique," 51.
[3] The European powers were: France, the United Kingdom, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, andNorway.

European powers justified the use of military forces to impose legitimate trade onto those African rulers who did not willingly give up the slave trade.[4] Despite genuine efforts to end slavery in conquered African regions, the Berlin conference was more about peacefully sharing Africa among European powers.[5] In that context, French colonial troops landed in today's Senegal and progressed eastward with the objective of reaching the upper Nile River, in present day Sudan.

Before going further, a little digression is necessary with regard to the country's naming. Although modern Mali had more than two names in the past, especially between precolonial times and independence, we are going to simplify this matter. In the following sections and chapters, French Sudan will designate pre-independence Mali, while Mali will designate post-independence Mali.

Thus, the following chapter will first examine the period of the French colonization of the region known as French Sudan, in order for the reader to understand the forces really at play during the French rule of the region. Then, this chapter will examine how, under colonial administration, ethnicity, religion, and economic enfranchisement shaped the stability of the region. The chapter concludes with an examination of the geographical challenges for the stability of the region and the foreseeable legacy of the colonial administration by focusing particularly on corruption within the colonial boundaries.

Historical Review of the Colonization of French Sudan (1880-1898)

As mentioned earlier, when the French colonial troops first arrived in French Sudan, they found an anarchic area in which insecurity was the rule.[6] Although strong

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[4] A. Adu Boahen, *General History of Africa - Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, First Edition ed., vol. 7 (University of California Press, 1985), 27.

[5] Patrick Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa 1880-1995*, Kindle ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), location 474.. Slavery had been part of the social organization of Africa for so long before the arrival of colonial powers that they pretexted, upon their arrival, that massive liberation of slave would have brought unwelcome social disorder. That is why slavery remained in force long after colonial rule started, which colonial powers used to their advantage.

[6] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 14.

empires such as the Tukulor in the north and the Samory in the south shared the control of the area, this control was very fluid internally and externally. Figure 8 shows the location of the two empires.
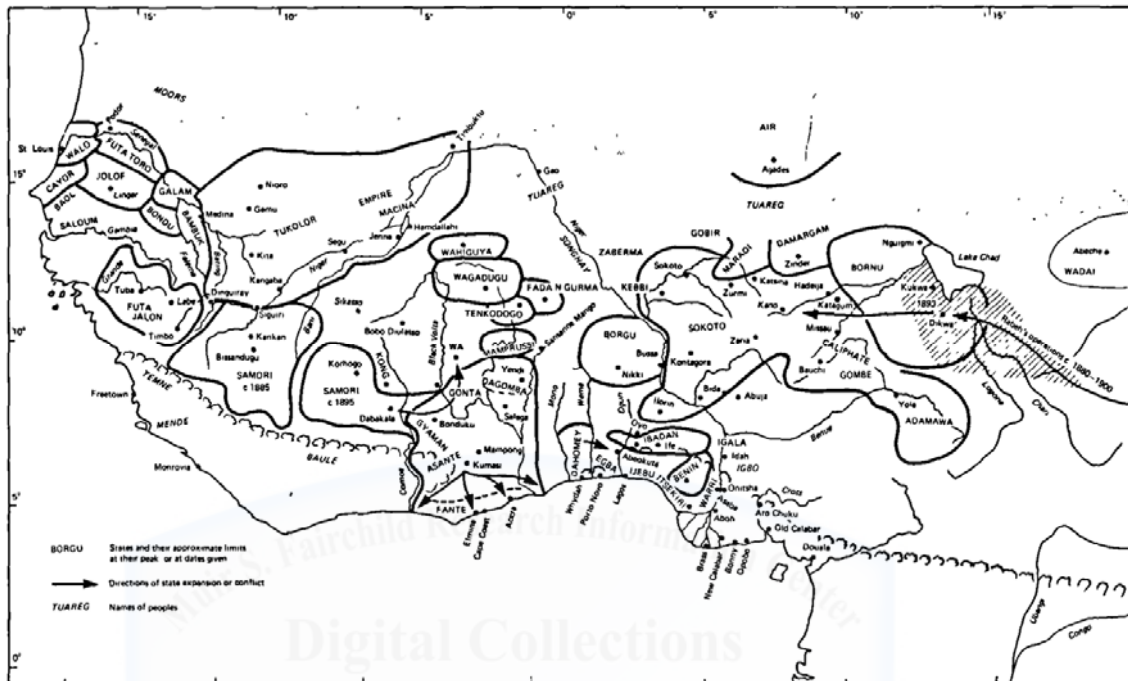
Figure 8: Distribution of West-African Nations at the Eve of French Colonization
Source: Boahen, *General History of Africa - Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, 115.

Internally, succession struggles hindered the prosperity of both empires. Externally, there was a racial rivalry between the Tukulor and the Samori. The Tukulor Empire, whose ruling class included Moor, Tuareg and Peul families—all with white-skinned and Arabic origins—included both Arabic and black-African peoples. The Samory Empire was mostly composed of black-African peoples. The whites in the north entertained a feeling of superiority toward the southern blacks, while the blacks resented the whites for years of enslavement.[7] In other words, the region presented both intra and inter-state instability. This was one of the reasons that the colonial powers, and France in particular, overcame the African peoples living in the region.

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[7] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 46; Boahen, *General History of Africa - Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, 117.

The conquest of French Sudan started on 1 February 1883 when French troops reached the Niger at Bamako and built a fort.[8] At that time, the region spread between the Algerian Sahara in the north and the Côte d'Ivoire in the south, between Niger and Upper-Volta—now known as Burkina Faso—in the east, and Senegal and Mauritania in the west. It spread over 1,250,000 square kilometers, which was about twice the size of France, between the tenth and twentieth parallels. For administrative reasons, the French divided the indigenous population into two racial ethnicities separated by the seventieth parallel: the blacks were in the south and the whites in the north.[9]

The West-African peoples had three options to deal with the advance of the French on their territory: confrontation; alliance; acquiescence/submission. The strategy of confrontation involved open warfare, sieges, guerrilla tactics, scorched-earth policies, and diplomacy. In French Sudan, local populations resorted to confrontation and alliance.

There are two main reasons that African people resorted to confrontation to deal with the French. First, the French used the method of military conquest almost exclusively, which consequently spurred militant reaction. Second, the share of the population converted to Islam was far greater than in other areas of West Africa. Therefore, since "for Muslim societies of West Africa the imposition of colonial rule meant submission to the infidel, which was intolerable to any good Muslim," they resisted the Europeans with added fervor and tenacity.[10]

The resistance of the Tukulor and Samory Empires illustrates both the reasons of the defeat against the French and the methods these empires used. In 1880, Ahmadu, son of Al Hadj 'Umar who founded the Tukulor Empire, was ruling the empire. Ahmadu, like most of African rulers, sought to ensure the survival of his state and to maintain its independence and sovereignty. To achieve these objectives, he first chose the strategy of alliance, later resorting to militant confrontation in the last two years of his reign. At first, Ahmadu sought alliance with the French for the simple reason that some of his black subjects, willing to recover their independence, provoked unrest and threatened his

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[8] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 45.
[9] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 11.
[10] Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule* (HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, 1968), 72.

position at the head of the empire. To restore calm, he needed arms and ammunition, as well as financial resources, which an alliance with the French guaranteed.[11]

The French obtained trade rights along the Niger River as well as Amhadu's cooperation to deal with the Soninke rebellion in the east of Senegal. By 1888, the French had suppressed the Soninke rebellion in the Senegal and signed an alliance with Samori Ture in the south of French Sudan. They could then turn against Amhadu and his empire. That is when Amhadu decided to resort to force against the French. Unfortunately for him, it was too late. Despite brave resistance, the Tukulor Empire collapsed under the French assaults in just three years.[12]

As far as Samori Ture was concerned, he was the ruler of the Mandingo Empire in South Sudan. He had been consolidating his empire since 1881. However, in 1882, his first encounter of the French ended with the defeat of his army near Bamako. Thereafter, he decided to avoid direct conflict with the French, who were free to deal with the Soninke and the Tukulor Empires. Meanwhile, Samori modernized his army with European weapons coming from British arm smugglers in Sierra Leone.

In 1885, the French captured the gold mines of Bure, which were important for the economy of the Samory Empire. Samori Ture chose force again to expel the small French contingent from the mines region. To help him fight the French, who were becoming increasingly interested in his territory, he signed a treaty with the British in Sierra Leone, hoping to impress both the French and potential dissident tribes with his alliance with a great power. Unfortunately, his alliance with the British assured him only a supply of small arms supply with the exception of artillery. This lack of artillery proved a great disadvantage against French troops who had some.

Thus, his resistance, which lasted from 1888 to 1898, resulted in a perpetual withdrawal to the east, despite some occasional victories. In 1898 he met his end, caught between French and British troops. The later withdrew their support, which allowed the French to capture Samori soon thereafter. It was the end of armed resistance against the

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[11] Boahen, *General History of Africa - Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, 120.

[12] Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, and Odile Goerg, *L'Afrique Occidentale Au Temps Des Français : Colonisateurs Et Colonisés (C. 1860-1960)* (Paris: La Découverte, 1999), 171.

French Sudanese conquest, at least for a while. The time had come to implement colonial rule.[13]

This short review of the colonization of French Sudan puts in perspective some of the reasons why French colonials easily defeated African people. First, at the time of the conquest, France was enjoying a relatively calm political climate compared to the multiple intra-state and inter-state conflicts and rivalry of African states. Furthermore, at the Berlin conference, France and the other European powers settled the regional issues regarding their colonial endeavors. This relative solidarity of the European powers contrasts with the division of the African tribes and states.

The French also benefitted from a modern military and logistical system superiority compared to that of their opponents. Other reasons, not discussed in detail here, include the relatively good knowledge of African people that the French had thanks to missionaries and explorers, their overwhelming economic resources, and the progress of medical science with prophylaxis, which protected troops from tropical deceases.[14]

An interesting aspect of this West-African defeat by the French, in French Sudan in particular, was the lack of unity of the populations in front of the colonizer. Local states were more eager to sign treaties with the powerful enemy in order to play a game of alliances than to consider allying together to push back the invader. This fractiousness allowed France to pursue its objectives of conquest. As discussed below, after failed attempts to assimilate, control, and unify the country, and in order to keep control, France would continue to foster—probably unintentionally—the divergences among ethnicities. On the other hand, religion would appear, once again, unifying thanks to the growing faith in Islam among the peoples in the region. While economic enfranchisement was not a concern for colonial stability as the colony was under French rule, a more unpleasant future was foreseeable.

Ethnicity under Colonial Rule

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[13] Boahen, *General History of Africa - Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, 123-27.

To say that the colonization struggle ended completely in 1898 would be incorrect; however, by that date, the French had pacified most of the country. The French had defeated their main opponents and killed or imprisoned local leaders. After the campaigns described above, the French had to deal with two major racial ethnicities in French Sudan: one with white origins from Northern Africa and Arab countries and one with broots. The former, including Peuls, Moors and Tuaregs, gathered the people who would most fiercely resist the French colonization.

After the conquest, these people pulled back north of the seventeenth parallel to take refuge in the desert areas of the Sahel and southern Saharan regions, from where they originated. Only the Tuaregs stayed in French Sudan while most of the Peuls and Moors went back to Mauritania. The Tuaregs had Arabic roots and were strict practitioners of Islam. They were nomads who made their living from livestock, and slaves, and caravan trade. Moreover, each great Tuareg family enjoyed a monopoly on the exploitation of the trade routes crossing its tribal lands.

The latter ethnic group gathered all black communities of southern French Sudan. Mandingo people, heirs of the great black empires, dominated this group. Their religions were animism for a majority and a moderate form of Islam for the rest. In fact, southern Islam tolerated the presence of other religions and did not claim superiority of one faith over another. Southern people were sedentary and lived mostly from agriculture.[15]

Under these conditions the French colonization involuntarily fostered the divide between northern and southern populations in two different ways. The French modified the social construct of French Sudanese society and treated the two ethnicities differently. The French changed the force ratio between the two ethnicities in the region, at the expense of the northern people.

Notwithstanding their personal interest for the grandeur of France, the French justification for the conquest of French Sudan was the modernization and liberation of the people from bloody potentates who had looted and enslaved them.[16] With that in mind, as soon as combat operations were completed, French administrators began to liberate the

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[14] Boahen, *General History of Africa - Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, 38-39.

[15] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 28-35.

slaves. Although they did so gradually, such an enterprise deprived the Tuaregs from one of their main sources of revenue.[17]

Furthermore, under protection of the antislavery policy of the French, black people were now relatively stronger compared to the Tuaregs, who backed away from the southern region and established their zone of influence in the region of Timbuktu. In fact, from a black-African perspective, the antislavery policy of the French gave black people of Sudan an opportunity to take revenge on the northerners, the Tuaregs in particular. In fact, as Henri Mager reported in his *Carnets Coloniaux*, there was a widespread feeling of revenge among the black people toward their northern oppressors.[18]

Nevertheless, the French managed to control these ethnic grievances by limiting contacts between the two populations. This separation of the ethnicities led in return to a policy of differentiation, which led to harmful ethnic preference. The logic of the French assimilation policy required that the assistants of the French administrators completed French education prior any official employment.[19] However, administrators quickly understood that the reality of the human terrain would not allow such a policy to apply, especially with the Tuaregs whose religious beliefs strongly opposed French Catholic influence.[20]

A direct consequence of the cultural opposition of the Tuaregs, as opposed to the cultural acceptance of the Blacks, was that the French privileged the south for economic development. The presence of most of the resources—gold and agricultural goods—in southern French Sudan probably also motivated the French policy toward the south. Nevertheless, the French did not completely ignore the Tuaregs. To preserve calm in the

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[16] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 9.

[17] This does not mean that only the Tuaregs were taking advantage of the slave trade. Black African rulers also enjoyed its "benefits". However, the south, resources rich, would find easier to switch from a slave-based economy to a regular one.

[18] Henri Mager, *Cahiers Coloniaux De 1889* (Paris: Librairie Classique Armand Colin et Cie, 1889), 111.

[19] Even if it was not a problem as long as the French were in Sudan because they dealt directly with the Tuaregs, these opportunities will become source of tension between the two ethnicities, as discussed in the following chapter.

[20] Coquery-Vidrovitch, and Goerg, *L'Afrique Occidentale Au Temps Des Français : Colonisateurs Et Colonisés (C. 1860-1960)*, 90; Pierre Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh.*

colony, they embraced many Tuareg traditions. However, the differentiated policy did bolster the integration of the black people of the south to the colonial empire, while keeping the Tuaregs segregated.[21]

The French also showed ethnic preference toward the black people with regard to enlistment in the colonial army. Despite few *méharistes* companies—made of Tuaregs, most of the colonial troops present in French Sudan were *tirailleurs*, which the French manned with Mandingo people from the south. Based on the French policy of a colonial empire "on the cheap," France heavily resorted to the employment of indigenous troops to maintain order in its African colonies. Their rule during the First and Second World Wars highlighted this tendency even more.[22]

France preferred to hire southern Sudanese over Tuaregs as soldiers because the former were good, disciplined warriors, while the latter, even though they were brave, showed constant indiscipline and disrespect for hierarchical authority.[23] Thus, one can understand the frustration that the Tuaregs felt toward the black population when they noticed that social promotion through military service and economic development were mostly reserved to black people of the south. Besides, the French with the help of black troops, which the Tuaregs had previously dominated, now enforced law and order among the Tuaregs. This French policy, which obviously ignored past history of the local populations, reinforced the ethnic tensions between the Tuaregs and the black Africans of Sudan.

All of the above shows that ethnicity could have had a destabilizing effect on French Sudan. Yet, the country remained relatively stable during the colonial period. This stability existed because, on the one hand, the French managed to contain black peoples' grievances against the Tuaregs who had dominated them for decades after the fall of the great black empires. On the other hand, the French also kept the populations separated in

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Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain (Karthala, 2012), 196.

[21] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 196.

[22] Boahen, *General History of Africa - Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, 315-16; Coquery-Vidrovitch, and Goerg, *L'Afrique Occidentale Au Temps Des Français : Colonisateurs Et Colonisés (C. 1860-1960)*, 187.

[23] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 30-34.

order to avoid conflict. While the French assimilated the blacks in the south, they kept the Tuaregs isolated, both geographically and culturally, in the north. Obviously, the main drawback of such a policy was that it led the French to differentiate between the two, socially and economically. By doing so, the French indirectly fostered among the Tuaregs a feeling of ethnic segregation that would grow slowly with the years.

In sum, the French policy fostered the ethnic fragmentation of the country in order to ensure a peaceful colony. Such a situation was may be manageable under the stabilizing French rule; however, in the long run, the French had only sown the seeds of ethnic tensions. However, their approach of religion would have a different outcome.

Religion under Colonial Rule

The divide in religion followed a line from Kayes to Mopti on the Niger River, bisecting the country into two areas of influence. In the north, lived the Muslims, while, in the south lived the Animists.[24]

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[24] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 36.
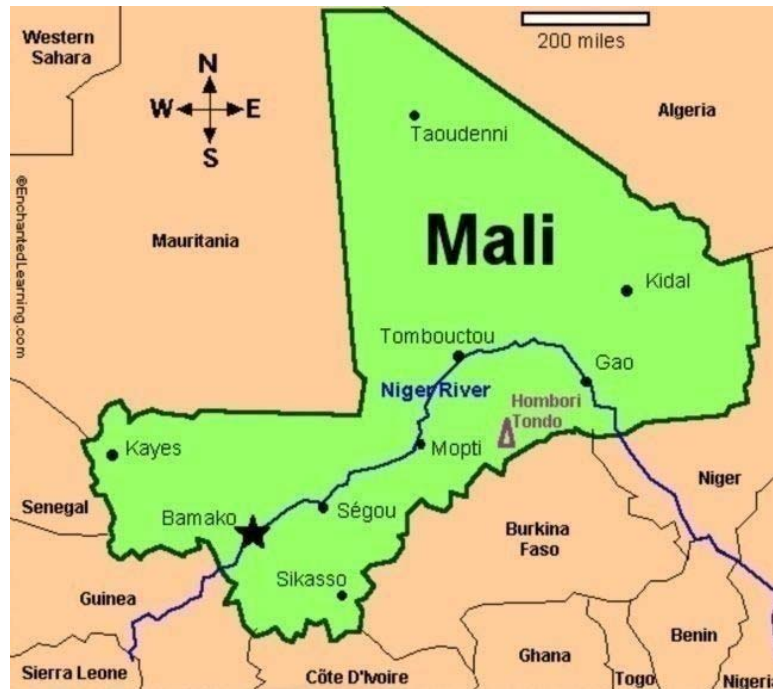
Figure 9: Map of Mali

Source: "Elections Démocratiques: La Leçon Du Mali À L'Afrique," http://www.aeta-network.org/elections-democratiques-la-lecon-du-mali-a-lafrique/ (accessed 19 March, 2014).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the influence of Islam came from the Arab kingdoms of the north of the Sahara. While in precolonial time Islam was primarily the religion of the elite, it slowly spread to the different classes of the French Sudanese society. One cannot deny the increase in converted Muslims between the precolonial age and the colonial period; however, this increase did not turn French Sudan into a Muslim country. Indeed, by the 1940s, Muslims represented only half of the population, while Animists represented the other half.[25] This being said, the slow conversion of French Sudan population to Islam produced two noticeable outcomes. The first was the colonial instability engendered by this conversion. The second was the social and cultural stability that it fostered among the indigenous population.

On the one hand, the slow process of conversion to Islam experienced by the southern Sudanese provoked colonial instability. Due to its political inclination, Islam did not tolerate French colonization because believers viewed the French as infidels who were taking over *dâr al-islâm* (territory of Islam). Therefore, despite the noticeable

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[25] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 38.

tolerance of French authorities for Islam at that time, the relationship between these authorities and converts to Islam deteriorated over time and became increasingly agitated.

By tolerating the conversion to Islam of southern French Sudan people, the French somehow themselves initiated the colonial instability. The colonial works, such as the railroad crossing the country into Niger, created migration fluxes of south Sudanese across Muslim regions of the country. Through marriages and settlement, increasing numbers of black-African workers converted to Islam. Similarly, Muslims merchants took advantage of this new means of communication to migrate toward urban centers, which in return increased the rate of conversion to Islam of city-dwellers, because it was easier to trade directly among Muslims than it was between Animists and Muslims.[26]

This increasing rate of conversion to Islam rapidly became an issue for the French authority as southern people increasingly considered the French an invading infidel. According to Islam, different options were available for the faithful to face the infidel in his conquest of *dâr al-islâm*: confrontation; migration to preserve the community; and *taqiyya* (fear), which consisted of cooperation while waiting for a propitious time for revenge. Thus, first encouraging or at least being indifferent to Muslim conversion because it helped achieve colonial objectives within Muslim territory, the French were soon confronted with violent and religion-based upheavals.[27] The French always answered to these rebellions with strong repression, therefore, Muslims quickly realized that it was in their best interest to choose the *taqiyya* tactic.

With time, the passive cooperation of the Muslims, dictated by *taqqiya,* naturally changed into a more active approach when both parties understood the advantages of peaceful cohabitation in Sudan. The French enjoyed undisputed access to Muslim regions, while Muslims elites and merchants could benefit from exchanges with the European community. The French also made effort to show Muslims that colonization was not about eradicating Muslim influence in the region. The French built mosques, *medresas*, and did not discriminate against the Muslim people. For example, they encouraged them to join military service and took advantage of the educative aspects of

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[26] Coquery-Vidrovitch, and Goerg, *L'Afrique Occidentale Au Temps Des Français : Colonisateurs Et Colonisés (C. 1860-1960)*, 140-43.

Islam to hire literate nominees for administrative jobs.[28] However, armed resistance of the Muslims never really stopped. Thus, the French authority always kept them under close surveillance, which created a permanent climate of suspicion, and thus instability, in the colony.[29]

On the other hand, Islam bolstered the development of social stability among the French Sudanese people. Beyond the ethnic disparities described in the first section, the slow conversion of southerners to Islam brought serenity among the people of French Sudan. With a common religion, they shared a common purpose against the French invader. Even if opposition remained silent, religion served as a federative tool between black people from the south and white from the north. Their common religion operated as a guiding light. Islam appeared to be the guardian of traditional African values such as familial solidarity, respect of elders, and moral rules. As opposed to the imported Christian religions, Islam looked like an African religion.[30] Thus, with regard to the African society, Islam procured Muslims—white or black—a sort of cultural and social African identity with which to oppose to the colonizers.

Thus, at first destabilizing for the colony by systematically calling into question the French influence in French Sudan, Islam proved to be a federative instrument at the indigenous level. Indeed, it helped create a common sense of belonging for the converted against the Europeanization brought about by the colonial power. Later, Islam, with the interested support of the French administration, also opened opportunities for the Muslims to participate actively in the economic and administrative life of the country. Thus, one can conclude that religion taken alone remained a stabilizing factor under colonial rule. One cannot say the same about economic enfranchisement, which like

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[27] Coquery-Vidrovitch, and Goerg, *L'Afrique Occidentale Au Temps Des Français : Colonisateurs Et Colonisés (C. 1860-1960)*, 146; Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 38.
[28] Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, 359-60.
[29] Coquery-Vidrovitch, and Goerg, *L'Afrique Occidentale Au Temps Des Français : Colonisateurs Et Colonisés (C. 1860-1960)*, 144-49; Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, 360.
[30] Coquery-Vidrovitch, and Goerg, *L'Afrique Occidentale Au Temps Des Français : Colonisateurs Et Colonisés (C. 1860-1960)*, 148.

ethnicity, would not directly hamper colonial stability, but would certainly sow the seeds of future tensions.

Economic Enfranchisement under Colonial Rule

From an economic standpoint, and specifically in terms of economic enfranchisement, the colonial period did not experience instability *per se*. However, similarly to the way in which the French administration jeopardized future ethnic stability, the French economic policy fostered inequality, which planted seeds of future instability. The French economic policy, which directly aimed at the prosperity of France, indirectly increased the economic inequality between northern and southern populations. This policy affected wealth distribution in two different ways. It increased wealth in the south, while it reduced the relative economic power of the north.

First, the French economic policy fostered development in the south, which substantially increased the standard of living and wealth of the southern population, compared to the north.[31] The French economic policy driven by the idea of *mise en valeur* (development) rested on a typical colonial economic policy. This policy consisted in the extraction and exportation of raw materials and importation of manufactured goods for local consumption.[32] The idea was to optimize the exploitation of natural resources so that France could obtain the maximum benefits, while it was also participating in the development of the colony by fostering a local society of consumption.[33]

For France and its policy of an empire "on the cheap," this concept naturally implied that France invested only in regions worthy of infrastructure's development. Thus, the south, resource-rich compared to the north, attracted most of the funding for infrastructure and European companies willing to trade with the colony. This migration of capital and European people to the south fostered the development of the south at the expense of the north. Numerous schools opened, which participated in the education of a black elite in the south who then helped the French administer the region.

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[31] Obviously, no comparison is possible with the metropolis, but here, the focus is on indigenous po pulation, not on the colonial power.

[32] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 95.

Furthermore, the country, which used to rely mostly on gold trade before the arrival of the French, now developed a diversified agriculture including cotton, livestock, cereals, and rice.[34] Investment in lines of communications was also more significant in the south than in the north, which fostered exchanges and its attractiveness for trading companies. So, relative to the north, southern French Sudan benefited from more French development efforts, which aggravated even more the economic disequilibrium between north and south.

Surprisingly, under French rule, this unequal—and somehow preferential— economic enfranchisement between the north and the south did not provoke any significant unrest. Indeed, while developing the south economically, the French brought quietness among the northern populations by showing interest for the preservation of their way of life. By respecting the way of life and trying to meet the expectations of the Tuaregs, the French secured the collaboration of these nomads. The French were thus free to implement their policy in the south, where the population had been much more welcoming to change than populations in the north.[35]

This policy, which was intended to avoid a confrontation with the Tuaregs that could have threatened their colonial business, required the French to limit European influence over northern populations. However, the French had to enforce some basic rules upon nomad populations to keep the sedentary southern people happy. For example, the French forbade—or at least limited—the slave trade, as well as *razzias*, which had initially become a palliative source of income for nomads in the north.[36] To compensate this loss of income for the Tuaregs, French administrators made great effort to develop the livestock capabilities of the people of the north. Livestock not only allowed Tuaregs to subsist, but also to trade. From a purely quantitative standpoint, one could consider this tolerance policy successful. In 1959, just before the French left, nomads, who represented

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[33] Albert Sarrault, *La Mise En Valeur Des Colonies Françaises* (Paris: Payot, 1923), 83.
[34] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 68-76.
[35] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 197.
[36] *Razzia* is a French word from Algerian Arabic, which designates an attack conducted by raiders on a tribe, an oasis or a village in order to steal livestock or harvests. From, *Le Petit Robert : Dictionnaire Alphabétique Et Analogique De La Langue Française* (Le Robert, 2010).

only seven percent of the soon-to-be Mali population, owned almost half of the country's livestock.[37]

However, from a qualitative standpoint, the assessment of this policy is less impressive. In fact, this French policy toward the Tuaregs of French Sudan had two consequences that aggravated an economic situation already degraded by the aforementioned economic policy in the south. First, by respecting the Tuareg traditions in order to ensure control of the area, the French indirectly disadvantaged the educational system in the north, which had in return an impact on the economic opportunities offered to northerners. Second, the French incentivized a mono-agricultural economy in the north, which one could consider like putting all one's eggs in the same basket.

Regarding education, we have already noted that the northern population of French Sudan had been very resistant to French influence since the beginning of colonization. The Tuaregs were afraid that the French wanted to transform their children into faithful Christians, which would have meant religious and psychological separation of the young generations from their nomad roots.[38] Fearing a loss of identity under French influence, the Tuaregs had a strong incentive to resist to foreign education. Conversely, the more moderate Islam practiced in the south explains why resistance was not as strong there. Thus, when the French tried to develop French Sudan by educating an African elite to help them manage the colony, the only population that welcomed the French initiative was the black population of the south.

Although the French attempted to force education on the north, they were also satisfied of the relative calm of the colony, which explains why they never pushed to hard to impose their educational system to the nomads, who had proven to be capable adversaries. Thus, French colonization fostered a radical change in the society that only decolonization would reveal. By creating a black-only African elite in the colony, they contributed to the precolonial domination of one ethnic group over the other.[39] By failing

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[37] Jean Clauzel, "L'Administration Coloniale Française Et Les Sociétés Nomades Dans L'Ancienne Afrique Occidentale Française," *Politique africaine* 46 (1992), 114.

[38] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 229.

[39] Clauzel, "L'Administration Coloniale Française Et Les Sociétés Nomades Dans L'Ancienne Afrique Occidentale Française," 116.

to educate their children, the nomads of the north lost any chance to become part of the soon-to-govern indigenous elite.

The second harmful consequence of French colonization on the north was the mono-agricultural policy, which put the local economy at risk in the long run, despite an initial improvement of the economic situation. As mentioned earlier, the conjunction of the local resources with the concern of the French for securing the area led them to encourage the only type of agriculture possible in the north that would not disturb the Tuaregs, i.e., breeding.

The French policy proved to be relatively successful considering the aforementioned share of the French Sudanese livestock owned by the Tuaregs. The Tuaregs, with the help of the French, transformed their subsistence livestock into subsistence and commercial livestock. Moreover, by interdicting *razzias*, the French fostered security, which allowed Tuareg caravans to trade livestock more safely through the south and the Sahelian region.[40] Under colonial rule, the Tuaregs initially benefited by focusing on the mono-agricultural economy advocated by the French.

However, compared to the south, their economic power remained weak. Against the diversified economy of the south—cereals, cotton, mineral, livestock—the north could not really compete. With only one source of revenue, the Tuaregs remained exposed to natural disasters such as drought. This vulnerability, which had been artificially created by the French pacification policy of the Sahel and Sahara, was responsible for the inequality between the southern and northern economies. Unfortunately for the Tuaregs, who had no other choice than to stick to their mono-agricultural economy after the French departure, this economic policy would prove disastrous in the 70s and 80s.[41]

In sum, the colonial era proved to be relatively stable in French Sudan with regard to economic enfranchisement, despite the growing disparity between the north and the south. The French introduced a new kind of economy to the African peoples of the

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[40] Clauzel, "L'Administration Coloniale Française Et Les Sociétés Nomades Dans L'Ancienne Afrique Occidentale Française," 114.
[41] see Chapter 5.

colony in order to add value to the country. Under colonial rule, both the geographical repartition of the resources and the acceptance of colonial economy by the local populations influenced French Sudanese economic policy and led to differentiation between the north and the south. Although the French rule eventually contained the immediate effects of this differentiation, the next chapter will put into evidence the problems that originated in this disparity. Here, we must examine the effects of geography, corruption, and colonial legacy on the overall stability of French Sudan.

The Importance of Physical Geography in French Sudan

French Sudan was—and is still—divided into three geographical areas. On the one hand, in the north one was the Saharan zone characterized by the absence of water and natural resources. Between the southern limit of the Sahara Desert and the northern shores of the Niger River was the region of Sahel. This area knew episodic tropical rains, though they were insufficient for culture and subsistence. Because of these geographical characteristics, nomad tribes, mostly Tuaregs, populated the regions of Sahel and Sahara covered by French Sudan. These desert and semi-desert areas spread over half of the colony.

On the other hand, south of the Sahel lays the region called by the French the Sudanese zone. It covered the other half of the country. Distinct from the previously mentioned two regions, this Sudanese region benefitted from good irrigation conditions thanks to the Niger River and one rainy season per year. This area was propitious for the culture of cereals, fruits, rice, cotton, and breeding. Sedentary people lived there. Due to the richness of its soil, the area was the most populous and richest of the colony.[42]

This short geographical description of the colony highlights two factors that aggravate the destabilizing effects of the elements examined earlier in this chapter. The geography of French Sudan may indeed raise both economic and a security concerns that deserve further examination. First, the geography of French Sudan is profoundly unequal with regard to natural-resource distribution. Most of the resources that interested the

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[42] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 15-17.

colonial power were located in the south, while the north was basically a resource-poor, arid territory.

This resource distribution led the French to foster development more in the south than in the north. Moreover, the nomads' opposition to French influence justified limiting development in the north, which allowed the French to avoid bothering the local population and provoking unrest. In addition to problems linked to ethnicity and economic enfranchisement raised before, this geographical aspect worsened the situation.

Second, the physical geography of French Sudan raised a security issue, which was due to the span of the country and the unequal distribution of the population. With regard to the span of the colony—more than two times the size of France—a significant contingent of police was necessary to maintain order. However, the empire "on the cheap" policy of the colonial power did not allow for a sizeable deployment of force. In the administrative region of Kidal, which spread over almost half the size of France, there were never more than thirty Europeans living there. Helped by hired locals, they were in charge of administrative tasks, law and order enforcement, tax collection, population census, justice, and public works.[43] From a security standpoint, presence on the ground presented a real stake that required full cooperation of the local population. This choice explains in part why the French tried to accommodate the nomads as they did.

Another challenge for the French related to geography was the low density of population in the north. Of the 3.5 millions people living in French Sudan in 1955, only six-hundred thousand were living in the northern regions—an area approximately the size of France.[44] From a security standpoint, controlling and policing such a dispersed population over such a large territory was very difficult for the French. Without the adequate intelligence and surveillance means, such a huge empty space was favorable for small groups hiding and raiding caravans or attacking patrolling colonial troops. Even if the French mitigated the effects of *razzias*, they never eliminated them from the security environment of French Sudan.

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[43] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 199.
[44] Spitz, *Le Soudan Français*, 31.

Corruption in French Sudan: An Omen of Colonial Legacy

*C*orruption in Africa during colonial times never aggravated the stability balance of the colony, but it modified the social construct of many African societies. Corruption was tolerated by the French administration as "a necessary evil" to keep control of the population. The most noticeable example of corruption was how the administration handled the local chiefs with regard to tax collection.

Due to the limited number of French administrators in the colony, the French quickly adopted a policy of association with locals in regions where they could not assimilate local populations. This policy of association led to the hiring of local chiefs to help the French perform administrative tasks. This process had the double advantage of not alienating completely the population by keeping an intermediary between the colonial power and the administered people, while relieving the French government of the need to provide these employees.

The French appointed these chiefs according to their influence and decisiveness when dealing with local population. Local chiefs were often in charge of tax collection. When they fulfilled their tasks, they were allowed by the French to keep a certain ratio of the taxes for their own before giving the rest to the colonial administration. The chiefs therefore accumulated private property and a way of life difficult to give up, which led most of them to abuse of their offices. From the French administration's perspective, the chiefs' example was a message to the population that proved that it paid to cooperate with the French.[45] But, when the chiefs failed to keep the population under control, the colonial masters pitilessly charged with extortion and rapidly replaced the failed chief with another, whom the French declared to be more competent.[46]

Such behaviors profoundly modified the social construct of the Sudanese society, which was based on a completely different role the chiefs. Indeed, as noted in Chapter 3,

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[45] Munyae M Mulinge, and Gwen N Lesetedi, "Interrogating Our Past: Colonialism and Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 2 (1998), 19.

[46] Coquery-Vidrovitch, and Goerg, *L'Afrique Occidentale Au Temps Des Français : Colonisateurs Et Colonisés (C. 1860-1960)*, 89.

they were not authoritarian rulers but leaders who took decisions through dialogue with the people's councils. The French policy helped delegitimize the chiefs in the eyes of their people. The French authorities contained the unrest this kind of corruption nurtured. However, such corruption created a latent enmity that would later resonate in the pleas of minorities such as the Tuaregs.[47] Thus, even if corruption under colonial rule did not worsen the stability climate, it definitely planted the seeds for future disturbances.

The Dawn of the French Colonial Legacy in French Sudan

It is now possible to identify some aspects of the colonial legacy for the postcolonial period. Colonial rule had different consequences on French Sudan at the levels of ethnicity, economic enfranchisement, and corruption. Regarding ethnicity, the French rule exaggerated the divide between the Tuaregs and the black population by implementing different policies for each one. The lack of investment from the French in the Tuareg area exacerbated the economic inequality between the northern and southern populations. Finally, corruption, which the French tolerated and in many ways encouraged, incentivized important tribal individuals to seek profit at the expense of their fellow citizens. This dysfunctional behavior, unfortunately, would perdure after independence.

In sum, after the period of chaos that followed the prosperity of the great black empires and kingdoms, the colonial period introduced a new actor in the stability landscape of what became French Sudan. Undeniably, the French brought stability to the country by applying colonial rule. The prosperity of their empire rested on the stability and peacefulness of those colonized; therefore, the French fostered an uneasy status quo between the two groups of French Sudan without really attacking the roots of the problem. The French only managed to allay the symptoms, but not the causes of an underlying discontent between the peoples of French Sudan.

In fact, the French policy, which privileged calm over genuine social reconciliation, planted the seeds for future tension among the population of French

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[47] Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, 187.

Sudan. The French policy rested upon a differentiated social policy between black people in the south and nomads in the north, which solidified the existing social divide.

Moreover, while the French apparently understood that religion could somehow help federate the people of French Sudan, their economic policy and the consequent economic benefits inverted the social construct that had prevailed for decades before their arrival. After independence, a direct consequence would be an exacerbated ethnic instability between the northerners and the southerners, fueled by a deep feeling of injustice among the northerners.

Finally, when looking forward from the colonial history of French Sudan, one can already envision the harmful influence that external factors such as colonial legacy in general and corruption in particular would play in the future of Malian ethnic and economic tensions. Geography once again revealed its damaging effect on the level of stability by presenting natural economic and security challenges such as uneven distribution of natural resources and the wide span of the country. All of the above would unfortunately take form during the postcolonial period of Mali that we shall now examine.

Chapter 5 - Postcolonial Mali

So far, we have reviewed the history of precolonial and colonial Mali through the lenses of ethnicity, religion, and economic enfranchisement to put in perspective whether they were influential or not on the stability of the country. We have also examined how factors such as geography, corruption, and colonial legacy, could have worsened this influence. The present chapter will examine the post-colonial period of Mali through the same lenses.

Mali achieved independence from France on 22 September 1960. After the French departure, the Malian political evolution was chaotic. The country went through a succession of military coups and dictatorships before engaging on the path of democracy in the beginning of the 1990s. Despite a promising beginning of democratization, the country experienced a new crisis at the beginning of the 2000s. This crisis reached a culminating point with the Islamist takeover of northern Mali in late 2012 and the French-African intervention in January 2013.

Thus, post-colonial Mali presents a rich case study for instability. With a close look at this period, we can identify two kinds of instability: a temporary one and a latent one. On the one hand, the successive dictatorships in the country disappeared because of temporary episodes of instability, which will be the focus of the following historical background. On the other hand, the existing divide between Tuaregs and black Africans of Mali nurtured the latent instability between the two groups. Unfortunately, people often tended to overlook this latter instability because the successive Malian governments of the post-colonial period have successfully managed to silence—often with harsh repression—the Tuareg's demands, at least until 2012. Yet, this latent instability, which we will be the focus of the present chapter, led to the events of 2012-2013.

To set the stage of the following analysis, this chapter starts with a historical review of independent Mali from 1960 to 2012. Then, through the lenses of ethnicity, religion, and economic enfranchisement, we will examine how the divide between the Tuaregs and the black Africans of Mali evolved during the post-colonial period. Finally, we will assess the influence of geography, corruption, and colonial legacy on this instability.

Historical Background

Under the name of Mali, French Sudan peacefully achieved independence from France on 22 September 1960. This independence was the culmination of a long process that immediately started after World War II, in 1946. In recognition of the effort of the Malian people to support the French war effort during both World Wars, the French allowed the gradual evolution of political rights in French Sudan. The French granted Malian people the right to create their own political parties.[1] Through their newly elected representatives, the people of French Sudan began to participate actively in the political life of their country.

This political participation was mostly among the southern population of French Sudan. The French policy toward the Tuaregs favored such a development. Added to the fact that the Tuaregs did not recognize electoral representation as a legitimate means of governance, the relative "protection" from Malian affairs the French provided to the Tuaregs indirectly provoked their disinterest from the colony's politics. Thus, in 1946, in Bamako, black people of Mali elected Modibo Keita as leader of the political party named *Union Soudanaise - Rassemblement démocratique Africain (UN-RDA)*.

In June 1956, the French government adopted a law that would subsequently drive French Sudan and other black African colonies toward more autonomy and, eventually, independence.[2] During the years preceding independence, the UN-RDA slowly won over all its political competitors to become, in 1960, the only relevant indigenous political party in French Sudan. For eight years after independence, Modibo Keita progressively drove his country toward the path of authoritarianism.

In November 1968, a military coup led by Lieutenant Moussa Traoré toppled Modibo Keita. This coup had its origins in the discontent of rural populations over the agricultural policy imposed by Keita. In response, the Keita government resorted to

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[1] In fact, the French granted this right to most of their black African colonies.
[2] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 278.

repressive and authoritarian pressure on the rural population in order to force rural people to abide by the new agricultural policy.

This repression provoked Kieta's fall. Moussa Traoré justified his coup on the fact that Keita's policy did not reflect the views of most Malians.[3] He subsequently established a dictatorship that lasted until 1991. At the end of the 80s, despite a visible liberalization of the economy, Traoré still believed that the country was not ready for democracy. Therefore, he violently repressed the popular movements that were arguing for greater political diversity in Mali. This repression provoked more demonstrations and riots that led to a military takeover in March 1991, led by Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré.[4]

After his military coup, Touré promised a quick return to civilian rule and held a conference to which he invited all major associations and unions. Elections took place in 1992 and Alpha Oumar Konaré, a well-known southern Malian intellectual, won the presidency. He oversaw the writing of a new constitution and established a multi-party government, which raised hopes of a more democratic future. Konaré served two mandates until 2002 when the people elected Touré, now retired from the military, president of Mali. Touré also served two terms before a military junta, dissatisfied with the government's handling of the conflict in the north, overthrew him in March 2012, leading to the crisis that confronts Mali today.

This short historical review of postcolonial Mali depicts what I have earlier labelled temporary instability. Until Konaré's election, the evolution of Mali's political scene did not follow a path of democratic stability envisioned by most westerners. Nevertheless, these autocratic governments achieved some kind of stability if one considers how long they lasted. But, when Konaré won the presidency in 1992, he started a slow process of democratization of Mali that would make his country a concrete example that democracy was achievable in West Africa.[5] Unfortunately for Mali, this process of democratization would also unleash the latent instability that no one had previously addressed. The instability originated in the Tuaregs' demands that previous

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[3] Bingen, Robinson, and Staatz, *Democracy and Development in Mali*, 246.
[4] Bingen, Robinson, and Staatz, *Democracy and Development in Mali*, 261-62.

regimes silenced through repression, which would lead to the events of 2012. Thus, in the following sections, I will analyze how ethnicity, religion, and economic disenfranchisement fostered this instability and how geography, corruption, and colonial legacy aggravated it.

Ethnic Suspicion as Source of Instability

Regarding ethnicity, the study of postcolonial Mali puts in perspective how two stereotypes have fueled the crises between the Malian government and the Tuareg people. Since the departure of the French in 1960, these stereotypes have governed the relationship between the Tuareg people and the Malian government. On the one hand, the black population of the south, which forms the majority of the ruling elite, has always considered the Tuaregs as white, feudal, racist, pro-slavery, bellicose and lazy savage nomads, willing to rid the Malian people of the mineral-rich Sahara.

On the other hand, the Tuaregs have consistently manifested racism toward black African people, who they have long considered unworthy to rule the country: "What can blacks rule over when they are only good to be slaves?"[6] These stereotypes were the perfect crucible in which to initiate ethnic tensions between the Tuaregs and the dominant black government of Mali. In return, the successive crises have aggravated these stereotypes even more.

Influenced by their stereotype about the Tuaregs, the Malian government has always considered the northern nomads to be a secessionist threat. Faced with constant claims from the Tuaregs for more autonomy, even independence, the Malian government became afraid of the political and physical integrity of its newly independent territory. One can quite easily understand where this fear came from in considering how leaders achieved the independence of Mali.

Contrary to other French colonies such as Indochina or Algeria, Mali did not achieve independence after a long and difficult war against the colonial power. The

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[5] Hussein Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," *The RUSI journal* 158, no. 1 (2013), 12.

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French simply agreed to leave after holding a referendum. Therefore, Keita and his government could not count on the strong nationalistic feelings usually nurtured by wars of independence, to build their new nation. That is why they opted to build their nation by putting into perspective the glorious past of the Mali civilization, which led to the *Mandefication* policy. The idea was to create the Mali nation on the basis of the Mande civilization.

To do so, Keita had to control and transform the nomads. His idea was to modernize, industrialize, and settle the Tuareg people.[7] Thus, while Keita was struggling to show the people of Mali that he could protect the future of their newly independent country, the claims for independence coming from the unsatisfied Tuaregs in the north threatened the territorial integrity and called into question *Mandefication*.

These demands further amplified the blacks' already held stereotype about the Tuaregs. During a conference before his inauguration, Keita staid about the Tuareg claim: "The OCRS [french acronym for Common Organization of Saharan Regions] will never be a political organization, at the very most an economic association of which neighboring states could be shareholders. Any conspiracy aiming at truncating the Sudanese territory would inevitably fail, and its instigators would be prosecuted."[8] Because of the stereotype held by the Malian government about the Tuaregs and the claims of the former, suspicion from the government toward the Tuaregs rose when the French left. This suspicion fueled the tensions between the two racial ethnicities of Mali.

The secessionist stances of the Tuaregs also increased the suspicion of the Malian government from an economic standpoint. In the early years of independence, the Malian government believed Northern Mali to be excessively rich in minerals, and that, if the Tuaregs achieved independence from Mali, they would deprive Mali of some of its promising natural resources. At the time of the Malian state-building process, the

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[6] Jean-Sebastien Lecocq, "That Desert is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Comtemporary Mali (1946-1996)" (Amsterdam University, 2002), 44.
[7] Lecocq, "That Desert is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Comtemporary Mali (1946-1996)," 72-75.
[8] Translated from French. Quoted from a speech of Modibo Keita in Charles Grémont, "Touaregs Et Arabes Dans Les Forces Armées Coloniales Et Maliennes. Une Histoire En Trompe-L'œil," *Note de l'Ifri* (2010), 11.. The case of the OCRS is further developed in the colonial legacy section.

government could not accept such a situation, which also helps explain the attitude of the government toward the Tuaregs. But, although time has shown that Northern Mali soil was rich in uranium, the belief that the Tuaregs wanted to capture natural resources of Mali really rested on weak evidence, given that no one had really explored the soil of Northern Mali. Nevertheless, this economic concern also fueled suspicion against the Tuaregs.

The Tuaregs also fell victim to a stereotype about the black population of the south. As noted in the previous chapters, they historically considered black people to be inferior human beings, unfit for ruling. This racial stereotype greatly hampered the chances of dialogue between the two ethnicities. This stereotype, added to the profound Tuareg suspicion in the new organization of the society, led the Tuaregs to consider the black ruling elite of independent Mali as usurpers.[9]

A feudal society by tradition, the Tuaregs did not believe in elections. Under French rule, they tolerated the blacks because the French, who had beaten the Tuaregs, imposed black dominance. When the French left, the Tuaregs did not understand why the blacks, who had not defeated the Tuaregs for centuries, could pretend to rule the country. From being in the position of masters, they felt like they had become slaves.[10] For the Tuaregs, the new government of independent Mali was not legitimate.

Furthermore, the lack of representation within the government, which consisted mostly of southern representatives who were not sympathetic to the pastoral culture of the nomads, nurtured the Tuaregs' feeling that the Malian government was trying to eliminate their culture.[11] The different policies of the government of Mali toward the Tuaregs increasingly reinforced this feeling.

In the 1970s, a drought struck Northern Mali and killed most of the Tuareg subsistence livestock. Different sources, from independent observers, to diplomats, to non-governmental organizations, reported the apparent lack of interest that the

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[9] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 309.
[10] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 309.
[11] Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali," 10.

government had for the Tuaregs' fate. Thus, the government prioritized the international food aid to the sedentary Sudanese population, disregarding the nomads who were the most affected. It seemed that the government used the drought as a political weapon to break the dream of autonomy of the Tuaregs; to push them into exile toward other countries; or, even worse, to eliminate them.[12] Thus, the initial stereotype that the Tuaregs had about the black government of Bamako just grew in importance with the unfolding of these crises.

In sum, under the influence of stereotypes, both the black population of Mali and the Tuaregs developed mutual, growing suspicions about each other. The blacks viewed the Tuaregs as a political threat to their newly independent country, while the Tuaregs regarded the black rule as an existential threat to their culture. This mutual suspicion created a climate of tensions that, in return, further nurtured these same stereotypes and escalated ethnic grievances. Thus, this situation led to four different armed confrontations between the Tuaregs and the government of Mali between 1960 and 2012. However, before examining these rebellions, we must first turn toward the impact of economic disenfranchisement, which also played an important role on instability.

Effect of Economic Disenfranchisement on Mali's Stability

From an economic standpoint, the relation between the Tuaregs and the black Malians presented two kinds of tensions: one about resource management and the other about economic opportunities. While the new government policy seemed to threaten the economic resources, it also did very little to integrate the Tuaregs into the active life of the country. After the French departure, the economy of Mali was still poorly developed. The new ruler, Modibo Keita decided to modernize and industrialize his country with the funds that the primary sector would provide. He embraced socialism as an economic policy, which led him to implement three important reforms that would provoke the opposition of the Tuaregs. As for the Tuaregs, Keita's policies deprived them from

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[12] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 378-81.

opportunities to make profit, even sometimes, to subsist. On the other side, the unwillingness of the Tuaregs to comply with the new revenue policies provoked the ire of the government.

Driven by his grand project of *Mandefication*, Modibo Keita chose a state-controlled economy for his country, on the model of the Soviets. Several aspects of Keita's policy were difficult for the Tuaregs to accept because they undermined several of their economic practices. The first aspect of Modibo Keita's socialist policy that bothered the Tuaregs was the principle of a state-controlled economy with regard to imports and exports.

For centuries, the Tuaregs had traded their cattle through the Sahel and Sahara without any kind of supervision. But now, they had to sell their livestock to the government, which would be responsible for exportation and importation. In other words, the government now legally controlled the revenue of the Tuaregs. However, the Tuaregs managed to avoid the restraints on their nomadic free-determinism by exploiting the porous region of Sahel with Algeria, exchanging their animals directly on the local Algerian markets.[13] The span of the territory made state control difficult, and this obvious reluctance to abide by state policy started to bother the government.

Additionally, a reform of taxation accompanied this reform of export and import policies. At that time, cattle were one of the greatest riches of the country, estimated at several billion francs. The government thus decided in 1962 to implement a new taxation on each animal of the herds. The Tuaregs found themselves particularly vulnerable to this new taxation because they used to have large herds and because this taxation did not discern between subsistence livestock and cash livestock. Furthermore, Keita introduced a new currency that lost its convertibility on the exchange markets.

Consequently, the Tuaregs became unable to sell or buy new cattle on exterior markets. Thus, their only option for economic opportunities was to turn toward the interior market, which made them more vulnerable to state control. Indeed, most of the Tuaregs lost a great part of their wealth because the government also imposed low prices

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[13] Lecocq, "That Desert is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Comtemporary Mali (1946-1996)," 76.

on the sale of cattle, which made them feel as if the government were deliberately targeting their way of life.[14]

The land reform was the last aspect of Keita's policy that convinced the Tuaregs of the government's economic attack on their way of life. In accordance with his socialist policy, Keita adopted the concept of the collective farm. He created state corporations to monopolize the land and purchase basic crops. This policy directly threatened the pastoral way of life of the Tuaregs, as well as its related economic benefits because it allowed the government to determine what kind of crops they could grow in their tribal area.[15] The kind of crop determined what kind of livestock they could raise. So by creating this monopoly, the Malian government controlled the economic life of the Tuaregs who raised cash cattle, but also the way of life of those raising subsistence livestock.[16]

In terms of job opportunities, the government did very little to allow the Tuaregs to climb the social ladder through government jobs. But, to induce the Tuareg cooperation, the Keita administration made many promises to them, which it never held. Government employees came overwhelmingly from the black ethnicity. The level of education of the Tuaregs people may explain this preference, but the ethnic suspicion about the Tuaregs is also a plausible explanation.

The Malian armed forces offer a good example. In the French culture, since the Napoleonic era, the armed forces had played the role of upward social mobility. People could rise in the society by climbing the ranks within the military. Built upon the French model, the Malian army was no exception. However, between 1960 and 1993, records show that only three Tuaregs managed to join the officer corps. The government forbade officer schools to educate Tuaregs. In addition, under the first two regimes of independent Mali—presidencies of Modibo Keita and Moussa Traoré—the simple idea of entrusting Tuaregs with some kind of control or defense responsibilities was

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[14] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 316.

[15] Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," 13.

[16] Devon DB, "The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People," http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-crisis-in-mali-a-historical-perspective-on-the-tuareg-people/5321407 (accessed Apr 2, 2014).

unimaginable.[17] If one considers the military capabilities of the Tuaregs, which the French praised, and somehow feared, such an attitude toward the Tuaregs denotes the obvious suspicion of the government.

As the example of the army demonstrates, the Tuaregs often found themselves economically marginalized with no real opportunity for success in the new economy. Moreover, they would have to face two great droughts in 1972-1974 and 1984-1985 that would put many of them in economic and social distress. Most of the young Tuaregs would flee Mali to neighboring countries such as Algeria and Libya. In Libya for instance, the Qadhafi regime would welcome them into barracks were they would learn the techniques of modern warfare.[18] The package of economic reforms aimed directly against the resources and wealth of the Tuaregs, as well as the lack of economic opportunities, exacerbated by the rampant suspicion between the two ethnicities, all contributed to the Tuaregs' decision to rebel against the central government.

The First Three Tuareg Rebellions: When Ethnic Suspicion Exacerbates an Economic Enfranchisement Problem

Postcolonial Mali experienced four different Tuareg revolts against the central government. The ethnic and economic issues presented in the previous sections were the crucible of the first three. The Tuaregs first rebelled in 1963 because they believed that the government wanted to suppress their way of life. Undeniably, the modernization campaign that Keita implemented at the beginning of the 1960s put in danger the pastoral way of life of the Tuaregs. By creating a state monopoly on soils, the government was in control of what the Tuaregs were able to grow and therefore in control of their lives. Feeling oppressed and humiliated, with no acceptable outcome to the situation they were in, the Tuaregs revolted. Keita, suspecting that this revolt was the beginning of a fight for the secession of Northern Mali, ordered a harsh repression.

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[17] Grémont, "Touaregs Et Arabes Dans Les Forces Armées Coloniales Et Maliennes. Une Histoire En Trompe-L'œil," 12.
[18] Grémont, "Touaregs Et Arabes Dans Les Forces Armées Coloniales Et Maliennes. Une Histoire En Trompe-L'œil," 12.

The indiscriminate character of the military reaction against the Tuaregs increased the gap between the two ethnicities. Indeed, Malian soldiers perpetrated mass killings of Tuareg civilians who were not even involved in the rebellion.[19] From a social standpoint, the consequences for the Tuaregs were dramatic. The fights provoked the exodus of many of them to the neighboring countries. By 1964, the government crushed the rebellion and placed the region under a repressive military administration.[20]

The second Tuareg rebellion took place in 1990. After the first rebellion, the government had promised infrastructure reforms to allow the Tuaregs to find an acceptable place in the new economic order. But, the country lacked the resources to follow through on most of these promises. As a result, the Tuaregs demands remained unaddressed, and discontent went on seething after 1964.[21] Furthermore, the droughts of the 1970s and 80s destroyed most of the cattle of the Tuaregs. Constrained to take refuge in camps or urban centers, the Tuaregs pastoral skills were of little value in these places where they had to live as mendicants among those who they considered their inferiors.[22]

On top of these economic discrepancies, the central government's suspicion about the Tuaregs never disappeared. Since 1964, the Tuaregs had lived under repressive military administration. These economic and ethnic grievances pushed the resentful Tuaregs to rebel a second time in 1990. The government understood that the military could not bring an enduring solution to this social problem and accepted mediation from Algeria in 1991.

In 1992, negotiators reached an agreement, known as the National Pact, which granted more autonomy and economic opportunities to the Tuaregs. However, during the negotiation process, the Tuareg opposition fragmented due to divergent positions about the government's terms. Consequently, despite the 1992 agreement, fighting continued

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[19] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 344.
[20] Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali," 10.
[21] Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali," 11.
[22] Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali," 12.

until 1996 between the Malian government and the most ardent separatist factions.[23] The rebellion finally ended in 1996 with a general weariness for the fight and the government's offer of subsidies to the rebels, in exchange of for their weapons.

In other words, unable to pacify and reconcile the Tuaregs, the government bought their arms and peacefulness.[24] Once again, the government cured the symptoms of the rebellion (the fighting), but the real causes (economic disparity and ethnic suspicion) remained. This situation led Jean-Sébastien Lecocq to conclude the following about the second rebellion in 2002: "The peace of Timbuktu remains, at the time of writing, an armed peace between communities distrusting each other and the state."[25]

Not surprisingly, in 2006, a new rebellion broke out. Once again, Tuareg rebels, dissatisfied with the government's handling of their demands, requested more autonomy and developmental assistance. A feeling of economic banishment within the population of Northern Mali spurred the rebellion. Former rebels who joined the Malian military after the signature of the National Pact in 1992 led the revolt. They were unhappy with the discrimination that they had to endure in the armed forces, the slowness of their promotions, and the mediocrity of their tasks.[26]

Seeing no progress in the implementation of the National Pact, they decided to rebel once more against the central government for the same reasons they had in the past, i.e., an economic disenfranchisement based on their ethnic affiliation. The same kind of agreement as before ended the rebellion: the government renewed its commitment to improving the economy in the northern areas where the rebels lived. Financial incentives for the rebel foot soldiers and "jobs for the boys" in the administration once again facilitated the deal.[27]

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[23] DB, "The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People."

[24] Lecocq, "That Desert is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Comtemporary Mali (1946-1996)," 295.

[25] Lecocq, "That Desert is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Comtemporary Mali (1946-1996)," 295.

[26] Ferdaous Bouhlel-Hardy, Yvan Guichaoua, and Abdoulaye Tamboura, "Tuareg Crisis in Niger and Mali," http://www.ifri.org/downloads/Sem_Tuaregcrises_EN.pdf (accessed Apr 9, 2014), 4.

[27] Andy Morgan, "The Causes of the Uprising in Northern Mali," http://thinkafricapress.com/mali/causes-uprising-northern-mali-tuareg (accessed Apr 10, 2014); DB, "The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People."

In sum, these three different rebellions underlined a recurrent problem regarding stability in postcolonial Mali, which is based on economic disparity grievances worsened by mutual ethnic suspicion. Ethnic suspicion rested on strong stereotypes that white and black people had about each other. On the one hand, this suspicion always drove the government of Mali to attach more importance to pacifying Northern Mali than fostering its development. On the other hand, this suspicion also drove the Tuaregs to call into question the good faith of the government. Thus, economic enfranchisement issues between rival ethnicities were the main factor in the resulting instability in Northern Mali between 1960 and 2006. Another factor, however, entered the equation after 2006: radical Islam.

Radical Islam and the Fourth Tuareg Rebellion

We have seen in the previous chapters that religion had never before been a major factor of instability in Mali. However, the successive crises of postcolonial Mali between 1960 and 2006 facilitated a new phenomenon in Mali, the spread of radical Islam. When conditions of instability had become favorable, radical Islam played a role in fostering the unstable situation that Mali now experiences. This section presents this process of radicalization of disenchanted Tuareg fighters that led to their alliance with terrorist groups during the fourth Tuareg rebellion in 2012.

After the accords of 2006, most of the Tuaregs went back to their homes, except a small group of rebels led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, a veteran of the rebellion of the 1990s. This rebel leader kept the flame of revolt alive, which eventually led to the creation of the MNLA (French acronym for National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad), a group of powerful secular Tuareg rebels. Ag Bahanga was a veteran of the 1990s rebellion. After several military setbacks, he withdrew to Libya where he rejoined a group of 1990 rebel veterans who left Mali after the disillusion of the 1992 National Pact. These Tuaregs had found refuge in Libya and received, in exchange for their fighter skills, modern military training, and weapons to fight Qadhafi's desert wars.

The relationship between Qadhafi and the Tuaregs was not new: it had started as an opportunistic one in the 1970s. When the Tuaregs needed refuge from poverty, drought, and unemployment, Libya provided it in exchange of for their military services.[28] Qadhafi enrolled the Tuaregs in his "Islamic legions" that he sent to fight in Lebanon, Chad, and Afghanistan. That was when radical preachers from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia started to be interested in these disillusioned and expatriated Tuaregs, among which was Ag Bahanga.

Thus, despite the historical moderate Sufist practice of Islam in Mali, missionaries from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia came to preach Dawa al Tabligh and Wahhabi views in Northern Mali in the late 1980s. Though two different interpretations of Islam, these schools of thoughts preached extremist ideologies. Through charities such as new mosques, *madrassas,* and community projects, they spread their influence among the poorest people, who were disenchanted with the government. These missionaries also sent young Tuaregs to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia for additional theological training.[29]

In their assessment of Northern Mali for USAID, William Farrell and Carla Komich stressed the worrisome effect of this increasing influence on the stability of the region, due to the alleged links between the Dawa and the GSPC, known today as al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[30] With a country consisting of 90 percent of Muslims and a disenchanted minority, Mali presented an attractive opportunity for these organizations to spur the creation of a radical theocracy.

A good example of this radicalization is the case of Iyad Ag Ghali, known as the founder of the Islamic group *Ansar Eddine*. Ag Ghali was a Tuareg rebel leader during the 1990 and 2006 rebellions. At that time, he was firmly secular and nationalist. However, disillusioned by both the government's lack of support and the other Tuareg leaders' commitment, he thought that he would be a better leader for the cause. Even though he had a strong reputation as a military and political leader, he lacked religious legitimacy.

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[28] Morgan, "The Causes of the Uprising in Northern Mali."

[29] Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," 14-15; William B. Farrell, and Carla M. Komich, "Usaid/dcha/cmm Assessment: Northern Mali," *Assessment* (USAID Office of Conflct Management and Mitigation), 4-5.

[30] Farrell, and Komich, "Usaid/dcha/cmm Assessment: Northern Mali," 5.

Seduced by the Salafi doctrines of the Dawa, he embraced that philosophy and sought to bring his followers along on his religious endeavor. However, just a few followed. Rejected by most of the Tuareg community, he left Mali for Pakistan where he furthered his study of Islam. At first purely utilitarian, his allegiance to radical Islam turned into strongly held ideology. He became very strict and puritanical.[31]

Thus, the Tuaregs, now divided into a secular majority and an Islamic minority, rebelled again in 2012. The fourth Tuareg rebellion broke out in 2012 led by the MNLA. Grievances were the same as in the past rebellions. The MNLA, formed of secular Tuaregs who used to fight for Qadhafi, came back from Libya, well trained and equipped after the fall of the Libyan dictator. They took advantage of the military coup that was shaking the south of the country to claim, once again, the independence of the Azawad. However, they were joined in their fight against governmental troops by the Islamic followers of Ag Ghali.

Disillusioned by the past achievements and believing that he was the best candidate to lead the rebellion to an acceptable outcome, Ag Ghali asked for the leadership. When rejected by the secular majority, he formed his own militia, which he named *Ansar Eddine* (Defender of the Faith). As long as there were governmental troops to fight, he lent his militia to the MNLA, but after they routed governmental troops from Northern Mali, he turned against the secular Tuaregs with the help of his shadow backers, the Algerian salafists of AQIM.[32]

Indeed, the radicalization of Ag Ghali's group allowed him to build relations with other religious organizations operating in the region: AQIM and the MUJAO (a French acronym for Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa). MUJAO is supposed to be a dissident group from AQIM, but they publicly recognized their work with AQIM. To simplify my argument I will hereafter refer to AQIM and MUJAO as Groups of Armed Terrorists (GAT). Although *Ansar Eddine* denies any link with GAT, it functions as a

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[31] Andy Morgan, "What Do the Tuareg Want?,"
http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/what-do-tuareg-want-20141913923498438.html (accessed Apr 10, 2014).
[32] Morgan, "What Do the Tuareg Want?"

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local umbrella for these GAT, the same way the Taliban has long functioned for al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.[33]

One can see proof of these ties made during the French intervention in Mali where *Ansar Eddine* and GAT fighters fought together against the French and African troops.[34] These ties with GAT allowed *Ansar Eddine* to have military preponderance over the MNLA, despite its Libyan equipment. Consequently, when the rebels and GAT pushed back the governmental troops in the north, during July 2012, *Ansar Eddine* took over the MNLA leadership with the financial and military support of GAT.[35] Pursuit of their dream of an Islamic theocracy could now begin.

They started to establish strict application of Sharia Law in Northern Mali, provoking the exodus of thousands of moderate Muslims to the south. Consequently, under the umbrella of *Ansar Eddine*, GAT came to control a significant piece of land— roughly the size of France—for their terrorists and criminal activities. However, the international community eventually reacted by authorizing the intervention of France alongside African troops in order to destroy the terrorists' strongholds in Northern Mali and reestablish the territorial integrity of Mali.

So, the examination of this fourth Tuareg rebellion shows how radical Islam worsened a situation already unstable in Mali. Indeed, troubles initially started for the same grievances as the previous rebellions. However, this instability took another dimension when *Ansar Eddine* opened the door to the Sahelian terrorist organizations in order to satisfy its ultimate goal of creating an Islamic theocracy in Mali.

Because of their shared religious agenda with the rebel group *Ansar Eddine,* GAT benefitted from the hospitality of the fundamentalist Tuaregs in exchange for GAT's financial and military support. This situation provoked an international anti-terrorist

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[33] May Yinh Welsh, "Making Sense of Mali's Armed Groups," http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/01/20131139522812326.html (accessed Apr 10, 2014).
[34] French Ministry of Defense, "French Lessons Learned - Operation Serval, Mali," *Briefing* (French Ministry of Defense): Paris; Bill Roggio, "Us, Un Add Ansar Dine to List of Terror Groups," http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/03/us_adds_ansar_dine_t.php (accessed Apr 10, 2014).

intervention in Mali. Thus, what is interesting in this period is how, under the cover of the instability provoked by secular claims, religion, in its radical form, aggravated instability by facilitating the settlement of terrorist groups in a sovereign country.

In other words, the initial impetus of the long-lasting economic and ethnic grievances perfectly served the agenda of the radical Islamists in Mali, which further increased instability. So in postcolonial Mali, religion, in the extreme form of radical Islam, has only been an aggravating factor of instability as were those that we shall now examine: geography, corruption, and colonial legacy.

Geography

Just as during the previous periods, geography proved to be an aggravating factor of instability during the postcolonial timeframe. Now however, added to the traditional effect of inhospitable physical geography in Northern Mali, political geography also proved to be a facilitator of instability. From a physical geography perspective, we note nothing new in this period. Indeed, after the departure of the French, the borders of Mali did not change; rather, they remained consistent with the ones of French Sudan. The landscape still offered natural shelters to those knowing perfectly the terrain, which the Tuaregs did. The span of the area of responsibility was also such that it was difficult for the Malian police and military forces to secure properly the territory outside the big cities of the north.

With the little economic support the Tuaregs received from the government in the postcolonial period and due to natural disasters that devastated their cattle, the Tuaregs found other sources of revenue in smuggling and banditry.[36] The span of the country and the porous borders of Northern Mali were particularly propitious for the development of

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[35] Hussein Solomon, "The Future of Azawad," http://icsr.info/2012/07/the-future-of-azawad/ (accessed Apr 10, 2014).

[36] "The Tuaregs: From African Nomads to Smugglers and Mercenaries," http://www.stratfor.com.aufric.idm.oclc.org/analysis/tuaregs-african-nomads-smugglers-and-mercenaries (accessed 27 october, 2013); Farrell, and Komich, "Usaid/dcha/cmm Assessment: Northern Mali," 5-6.

this alternate source of revenue for the Tuaregs. Even worse, these activities also became a source of revenue for corrupted government officials. In sum, physical geography clearly benefited the rebels, smugglers, and bandits, as it did in the two previous eras. These factors increased instability in the region.

However, the real novelty for postcolonial Mali came from the impact of political geography. The process of decolonization created new autocracies in Northern Sahara such as Libya and Algeria. When considering the events in Northern Mali between 1960 and 2012, we cannot ignore the influence of this these two countries. First, Libya, under Colonel Qadhafi, supported the Tuareg rebels during the period. This purely opportunistic support allowed instability to persist in Northern Mali.

After the first Tuareg rebellion, Tuaregs willing to flee the Malian repressions found refuge in Libya in exchange for their services.[37] Until the mid-1970s, Libya trained and equipped the Tuaregs to fight Qadhafi's wars against Israel and the Soviets, as well as wars in the Sahara Desert. After the oil crisis, with oil revenues decreasing, Libya stopped exporting Tuaregs fighters but continued to train and equip them in the south of the country. This arrangement allowed Tuareg rebels such as Ibrahim Ag Bahanga to keep the rebellion alive from outside Mali with the hopes that when the right time came along, the Tuaregs would have enough military strength to reclaim Northern Mali from the southern Blacks.[38]

Thus, in 2012, after the disintegration of Qadhafi's forces, the Tuaregs broke the opportunist alliance and went back to Northern Mali with an impressive arsenal, which included BM-21, BTR-60, ground-to-ground and ground-to-air missiles. The training and arsenal that they acquired in Libya allowed them to route the poorly trained and equipped Malian army, quite rapidly.

Furthermore, instability in Northern Mali has also been fostered by Algeria's attitude toward the terrorist groups that it was fighting within its borders. Indeed, at first, Algeria offered refuge to the 1962-1964 Tuareg rebels in order to use them against the GIA (French acronym for Armed Islamic Group). Thus, Algeria became a safe haven for

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[37] Morgan, "The Causes of the Uprising in Northern Mali."

[38] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 432-42.

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Tuareg rebels provided they helped the Algerian government against the GAT. This new safe haven for Tuaregs further complicated the task of the Malian government to enforce security in the north and fostered instability.[39]

Then, just before 2000, the anti-terrorist policy of Algeria changed from exterminating into expelling the Algerian-based terrorist groups from its soil and closing the borders, with little respect for the consequences on the neighboring countries. Algeria's new strategy was, in other words, to compel these troublesome terrorists groups to relocate their activities into neighboring countries. In 2006, the Algerian government eventually managed to expel these terrorist groups. In fact, Algerian Islamist groups had lost the support of the population after their affiliation to Al-Qaeda central. They had also suffered heavy casualties from Algerian security forces supported by US and European efforts against global terrorism.

Consequently, to avoid complete annihilation by Algerian security forces, terrorists groups such as the GSPC, soon-to-be AQIM, relocated they their main bases of operations in neighboring countries, including the Sahelian region belonging to Mali.[40] There, they used their financial resources to engage in charity works with local Tuareg tribes disillusioned with the government.[41] These tribes and the GAT thus started a new relationship.

Promoted by Algeria, their previous rivalry changed into utilitarian cooperation. Thus, GAT gained access to the trade routes that the Tuaregs controlled. They also enrolled the Tuaregs in their smuggling operations, which further developed illicit activities in the Sahelian region. Furthermore, terrorists established tighter ties with some Tuareg families thanks to marital alliances.[42] This process led to the apparition of mutual support networks and eased the radicalization of Tuareg groups. So, first by harboring

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[39] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 426.

[40] Stephen Harmon, "From Gspc to Aqim: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group Into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and Its Implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region," *Concerned Africa Scholars* 85 (2010), 23-25.

[41] Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," 15.

[42] "The Tuaregs: From African Nomads to Smugglers and Mercenaries."; Harmon, "From Gspc to Aqim: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group Into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and Its Implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region," 19-20.

Tuareg rebels, and then, by expelling terrorists from its territory without any concerted tactics with its neighbor, Algeria indirectly participated in the further development of instability in Mali.

In sum, once again the geography of Mali worsened the already endemic instability of the country. This time, though, political geography, exacerbated by the region's rough terrain, increased the pressure on the work required of Mali's security forces. The policies of neighboring countries such as Algeria and Libya further nurtured instability. These two countries irresponsibly exported—directly or indirectly—more instability into Mali, in order to serve their own political interest. However, in the period between 1960 and 2012, geography was not the only aggravating factor that Mali had to deal with. Indeed, in spite of a peaceful decolonization process, Mali still endured the legacy of its colonial past.

Colonial Legacy

This section will examine how the legacy of the French colonial governance on Mali influenced the already existing stereotypes between the Tuaregs and the black people of south Mali. Having said that, this section will not deal with corruption, which we will examine separately in the subsequent section because of the new aspect that it would take between 1960 and 2012. Thus, two features of Mali's past are worth mentioning as part of the colonial legacy that aggravated instability in postcolonial Mali. These two features were the difference in French treatment between the Tuaregs and the blacks during the French occupation and the support to the Tuareg independence movement by the French military at the end of the French presence in Mali. Both features fostered the stereotypes that each ethnicity had about the other.

First, when the French ruled the country, they displayed an obvious difference of treatment between the two populations. This differentiation, both geographically and morally based, widened the gap between both population ethnic groups. On the one hand, the French physically separated the two racial ethnicities. Cut off from each other for

decades, or at least with significantly reduced contact, the two populations could only develop preconceptions about the other fueled by history.

On the other hand, the French displayed a moral difference of treatment that probably nurtured the antipathy of the southern Blacks toward the French and their protégés, the Tuaregs. During colonial time, the French never managed to pacify completely the Tuareg land. As noted in the previous chapter, to avoid insecurity in the north, the French decided to abide by the Tuareg traditions while in the south, they implemented an assimilation policy. Unfair in the views of the blacks, this differentiation probably fostered the resentment of this latter population toward the Tuaregs.

Furthermore, the French never completely abolished slavery in the north in order to obtain the sympathy of the Tuaregs. The French limited slavery, but maintained a minimum level to keep the Tuaregs at peace.[43] This last legal differentiation had the double effect of provoking resentment among the black population, but also of maintaining the Tuareg stereotype of the inferior black people.

The second feature of colonial legacy aggravating instability in Mali was political. It consisted of the French support for the OCRS (a French acronym for Common Organization of Saharan Regions). This organization was supposed to administer the nomad populations of the Sahara. Thus, when the Tuaregs learned about the probable independence of Mali in 1956, they started claiming their right for self-determination and independence and gathering with other Tuareg tribes spread over the Sahelian and Saharan regions.

Years of life among the Tuaregs and familiarization with their traditions led many French military personnel in general, and the French *Méharistes* officers in particular, to become enamored with the Tuaregs' nomadic way life.[44] They deemed this way of life worth preserving for the sake of the region. Thus, they strongly supported the creation of the OCRS.

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[43] Lecocq, "That Desert is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Comtemporary Mali (1946-1996)," 46-51.

[44] *Méharistes* were French troops mounted on camel and specialists of desert warfare. From *Le Petit Robert : Dictionnaire Alphabétique Et Analogique De La Langue Française*.

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This sponsorship reinforced the belief of the Tuaregs in the legitimacy of their claim. They thought that they would eventually obtain their independence because the French, who supported it, had previously vanquished the Blacks. The latter would thus abide by the French will in order to obtain the independence of Mali. As a result, such was the mindset of the Tuaregs who could not comprehend why the French left Mali without helping to establish their old protégés' cause.[45] This action left the Tuaregs disillusioned and stoked their desire for independence. The OCRS project thus fueled the distrust between the southern blacks and the Tuaregs during the ensuing decades.[46]

In sum, French colonial legacy aggravated the existing stereotypes between the Tuaregs and the blacks. Because of the geographical and moral differentiation that they experienced during the French occupation, coupled with the political dreams the French fostered, these two populations nurtured the ethnic rivalry, a rivalry born from their conflicting common history. However, another feature of colonial legacy also had a worsening effect on the tensions between the Tuaregs and the black government of Mali. Thus, we now examine the corrosive effect of corruption in postcolonial Mali.

Corruption

One can find the origins of corruption in colonial practices. For instance, the French allowed local chiefs to accumulate personal wealth by skimming from the taxes they collected from their fellow citizens. The French tolerated this practice as long as these chiefs were fulfilling their basic tax duties and kept the local population under control. Although this practice slowly disappeared during the postcolonial era, mainly because discredited local chiefs also disappeared, the concept slowly evolved into a system of institutionalized corruption. Today, institutionalized corruption has reached such a level that Transparency International, in a 2013 report, rated Mali in the last third

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[45] Boilley, *Les Touaregs Kel Adagh. Dépendances Et Révoltes : Du Soudan Français Au Mali Contemporain*, 286-300.

[46] Lecocq, "That Desert is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Comtemporary Mali (1946-1996)," 52.

of the world's countries for corruption, identifying Mali as one of the most corrupt nations in the world.[47]

The settlement agreements from the first three rebellions clearly reflect the legacy of the French practices. The Malians resolved these crises with governmental promises and punctual financial incentives. These financial incentives benefited only a select few Tuaregs—negotiators and main leaders—and did little to improve the quality of life of the Tuareg people.[48] Contrary to the French, who managed to maintain significant stability with these practices, the postcolonial government of Mali never managed to bribe the right interlocutors as the frequent occurrence of rebellions in Northern Mali testifies.

Worse, instead of bringing stability, these corrupt practices, which became notorious, help explain the fragmentation and radicalization of the Tuaregs. Indeed, the *marabouts,* whom the people previously admired as living Sufi saints, discredited themselves through their involvement in the negotiations and their subsequent relations with government officials. Thus, more and more Tuaregs turned toward the Islamists and their liberation theology, leading to the increased radicalization of the region and increasing instability throughout Mali.[49] This radicalization caused more instability.

Subsequently, the colonial practice of buying peace led to the institutionalization of corruption under the Touré administration. Corruption touched every sector of governance. In the economic sector, Touré favored the rich connected to ruling political elites, rather than the poor. He limited the poor's access to land and water, while he granted access to Afro-investors connected to members of the ruling political party.[50] It should be little wonder that this situation increased the discontent of the poorest, among which were the Tuaregs.

Furthermore, the government too often misappropriated the financial aid, ostensibly given to further the development of the north, in order to pursue its own political agenda. Thus, $4 million disappeared from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS,

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[47] Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2013 - Results," http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/ (accessed Apr 11, 2014).
[48] Morgan, "The Causes of the Uprising in Northern Mali."
[49] Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," 12.
[50] Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," 14.

malaria, and tuberculosis, funds many alleged that President Touré used to buy political support.[51]

From a security standpoint, the military did not avoid the temptations of corruption. Recruitment in the Army depended mostly on the hierarchical acquaintances the applicant had with high-ranking officers. This point explains in part why the Malian army was so poorly skilled when fighting the Tuaregs and Islamists in 2012: acquaintances were more important than martial skills.[52]

In addition, misappropriation of funds by corrupted officials consistently hampered effective funding of the military not only in terms of equipment, but also in terms of wages. Consequently, more and more military officials in the north increasingly colluded with bandits and, smugglers as a source of additional income. For instance, before the events of 2012, the continuous military occupation of the region allowed the military to control some of the Sahelian trade routes at the expense of the Tuaregs. Thus, the latter lost control of the smuggling and narco-traffic routes that used to provide them with palliative revenue, while the former lined their pockets leading to frustration and increasing instability. Since then, the region has not known any period of calm.[53]

In sum, corruption in Mali evolved from a relatively well-controlled phenomenon by of the French to an unregulated one that led to further instability in the country. Critical institutions, such as the ruling elite and the military, contaminated themselves with a culture of corruption. As with other factors examined here, this factor contributed to the stereotypes between the southern Blacks and northern Tuaregs. These enduring stereotypes continue to aggravate the decades old tensions between the Tuaregs and the government.

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[51] Olivier Talles, "Le Mali Face Au Scandale Des Détournements De Dons Pour La Santé.," http://www.la-croix.com/Archives/2010-12-22/Le-Mali-face-au-scandale-des-detournements-de-dons-pour-la-sante.-_NP_-2010-12-22-392545 (accessed Apr 11, 2014).

[52] Solomon, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," 12.

[53] Malika Groga-Bada, "Armée Malienne : Opération Refondation," http://www.maliweb.net/armee/armee-malienne-operation-refondation-112534.html (accessed Apr 9, 2014).

This analysis of postcolonial Mali has shown the convergence of several factors of instability, which led to the stupendous takeover of terrorist groups in Northern Mali, in 2012. A decades-long grievance about equal chances for economic opportunities, fueled by ethnic suspicion, has spiraled up under the harmful influence of radical Islam, colonial legacy, and heavy corruption. Furthermore, both the physical and political geography of Mali provided the ideal environment for the successful takeover of 2012.

Chapter 6 - Synthesis

The previous analysis of three different periods of Mali's history—precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial—helps us understand how Mali came close to collapse in 2012 under the joint assaults of rebels and Islamic terrorist groups who took advantage of a military coup in the south. Each period experienced a set of conditions of instability that consistently appeared through history and culminated with the events of 2012-2013. This culmination created the overall level of instability that benefited to the terrorists' endeavor of chopping a state of their own in Northern Mali.

Through the following cross-history evaluation, we will see that the root causes of the Malian instability rest upon ethnic and economic disenfranchisement tensions between the sedentary people in the south and the nomadic people in the north. Furthermore, these two kinds of issues have fuelled the historical tensions between the two main ethnic groups in Mali and, therefore, one cannot disassociate one from the other, in the case of Mali. What we did not see, however, was a significant effect from religion as a factor of instability in Mali; instead, it proved only to be an aggravating one like geography, corruption, and the colonial legacy.

Instability in Mali: The Explosive Mixture of Persistent Ethnic Rivalry and Economic Disenfranchisement

First, the continuing instability endured by Mali today finds its origins in chronic ethnic and economic disenfranchisement issues that we can trace back to the influence of precolonial history. Because precolonial Mali was significantly stable, it spurred a utopian model in the minds of its postcolonial rulers. After the peaceful French departure in 1960, the new black majority in power sought to build a nation on peaceful foundations. Therefore, Malian leaders chose to follow the model of the prestigious Mali Empire in order to build an enduring nation.

This model revived the idea of black dominance in a Mali that profoundly differed from the days of the empire. It revived a government of black dominance that encountered strong resistance from the northern nomads of white origins, who also had a

history as rulers of the northern region. The ethnic tensions mentioned in the previous chapter arose from this opposition to the favored position of the southern blacks in the government.

Ethnic grievances in Mali also find their origins in the post-imperial period, just before the French colonized the country. The empire of Mali kept its peoples united mostly through the prosperity and prestige that it built through the years. When it fell victim of internal struggles for power, its prestige and prosperity declined, as did its unity.

Consequently, the black empire suffered assaults in its periphery perpetrated by vassals, most of whom were nomads willing to claim a share of the empire's treasure and prestige. As they conquered more and more territories of the former Mali Empire, these nomads established enslavement of black people as a lucrative business, which even persisted after the arrival of the French. This troubled period gave birth to stereotypes from which ethnic suspicion would appear and eventually exacerbate the economic tensions of the postcolonial era.

The French also contributed to the ethnic and economic divide between the nomadic tribes of the north and the sedentary people of the south with their colonial policy. They applied assimilation to the black population of the south, while they compromised with the Tuaregs in the north in order to maintain peace and stability in the colony. At first sight, this fact does not seem very important by itself. However, when compared to the stability of the empire of Mali, one major difference becomes evident.

The Mali Empire maintained ethnic stability through a decentralized system of governance that presented a minimum of standardization. The empire functioned as a true federation of vassal states. The federal centralization made the different ethnicities feel as they they belonged to the same nation or empire. The French employed a decentralized model of governance, but it lacked the standardized dimension required in a genuine nation building enterprise. Indeed, concerned with the prosperity of the colony, which rested on its peacefulness, the French implemented different sets of rules for the Tuaregs and the blacks.

Unavoidably, this feature of the French policy created a chasm between the two ethnicities, which no longer felt like they belonged to the same nation, or at least to the

same country. The "surprise" of the Tuaregs when the independence failed to lead to self-determination for the people of the north, especially in light of the harsh treatment visited upon the northern Turaregs by the southern, black government of the Azawad demonstrates this latter statement. Indeed, the French colonial rhetoric made them believe that independence of the Azawad would be ineluctable when the French had left.

In addition, the French economic policy clearly favored the resource-rich southern Mali region, despite the few development initiatives in the north. While the *mansas* of the Mali Empire made sure to control the people's expectations with the caste systems, which assured members of the same caste the same benefits, the French chose to differentiate the blacks from the Tuaregs economically. The caste system brought some sort of homogenization within the different layers of the society whatever the race was.

Conversely, under French colonization, while the south went through economic modernization, the Tuaregs could still enjoy the practice of their pastoral way of life. Even if this policy originated in multiple factors such as the resistance of the Tuaregs to French influence, the outcome was an obvious economic stagnation of the Tuaregs, which widened the economic gap between both groups. Added to the resurgence of the great black empires, which renewed the idea of black dominance in Mali, this gap have had a great influence on the continuing instability of postcolonial Mali.

At last, in order to revive the greatness of the black empires in Mali, the early rulers of independent Mali had to assert the central authority of the black population over the Mali territory. Consequently, helped by the fact that the Tuaregs did not have a suitable education, the government almost exclusively reserved its jobs for the black people of the south. Similarly, the military offered better opportunities of promotion to people of black origins.

Even though this policy may seem similar to the one implemented by the Empire of Mali with its official representatives, it differed in one important point, that is, local consultation. Indeed, government officials of independent Mali made decisions and imposed them without consulting with the Tuareg people. For example, we can cite the modernization campaign described in the previous chapter, which neglected the Tuaregs' way of life. One can thus easily understand the subsequent clashes between the two ethnicities over the economic concern that such a policy raised.

Furthermore, with regard to economic improvements and benefits, the obvious ethnic preference displayed for the blacks—which probably emerged from historic suspicion—created even more economic grievances. The instability that Mali knows today has developed from these grievances, which materialized in the successive Tuareg rebellions.

By comparing these three periods of Mali history, we have identified enduring ethnic rivalry and economic disenfranchisement as necessary and sufficient conditions of instability in modern Mali. These two factors have consistently appeared during Mali history. Sometimes properly, but always temporarily, handled by the different authorities that ruled Mali, these two sources of instability have always affected the country. Mali and the international community have felt their repercussions during the culminating violent events of 2012. However, if these conditions were necessary and sufficient in the case of Mali, additional factors such as religion, geography, corruption, and the colonial legacy have aggravated their effects, as the next section will demonstrate.

The Aggravating Factors of Instability in Mali

Although ethnic rivalry and economic disenfranchisement are the primeval soup of the Malian crisis, we would not have witnessed the culmination of 2012 without the convergence of several other factors, which are radical Islam, the challenges of geography, corruption, and the colonial legacy of Mali. First, contrary to the initial hypothesis of this study that ranked religion among the main factors to assess, it is now clear that religion generally had a stabilizing effect through the history of Mali. It always gathered the population around the same purpose so much so that Islam became a symbol of Malian identity under colonial rule.

However, in the late postcolonial period, Islam took a form not seen before seen in Mali, i.e., radical Islam. This occurrence concerned only a few Tuaregs, but the religious tolerance that Islam had shown for centuries in Mali had suddenly departed as this radical minority started to gain influence in northern Mali. The introduction of radical Islam in northern Mali gave the opportunity to terrorist groups living in the

lawless regions of Sahel to spread their influence to local disillusioned people, which increased the already rampant instability of the region.

Second, geography continually hindered stability in Mali. In chapter 2, I introduced the notions of physical and political geography to distinguish both influences as we travelled through the history of Mali. This study showed that Mali has systematically suffered from insufficient security forces to deal with the geographic span of the country. Indeed, the empire of Mali collapsed under the assaults of peripheral enemies mostly because it was unable to secure properly its borders. With no real armed opposition in the periphery, Berber tribes of the Sahara easily conquered these regions before putting them under the control of Arab Emirs.

Later, the French colonizers and the government of independent Mali experienced the same difficulty to control this vast country. In the most remote areas, both authorities only controlled the largest cities, leaving the countryside unguarded. This uncontrolled territory proved propitious for unrest to grow, a condition which rebels and terrorist groups were happy to take advantage of. Undeniably, the territorial span of Mali has always been a serious challenge to its stability.

Furthermore, the influence of political geography on the degree of instability is also visible if we compare the situation at the time of the French colonization with the situation in modern Mali. When the French colonized and later occupied Mali, they enjoyed a favorable political environment. Indeed, during the colonization process, their opponents were either fighting other local enemies—like the Tukulor fighting the Samory—or other colonial powers. As a result, the French often had to fight a single, already overwhelmed, and reachable enemy.

Similarly, during their occupation of Mali, the French had no problem with containing the little unrest that they had to face within the country because the surrounding territories belonged either to them or to another colonial power. Cross-border instability was thus limited by this favorable condition.

However, with decolonization, the political geography changed significantly. When Algeria became a sovereign country, it allowed Tuareg rebels to take refuge on its soil. This cooperation from Algeria created more difficulties for the Mali government's

effort to control the north of the country. Indeed, rebel soldiers enjoyed a safe haven in a sovereign country in which Mali could not pursue them.

Libya also proved to be another source of instability for Mali by offering refuge to the Tuaregs and by training and equipping them for Qadhafi's Islamic legions. By equating the security of their country to local security instead of regional security, Algeria and Libya fostered instability in northern Mali. The Tuaregs served adequately their short-term security goals, but these two countries failed to see the long-term consequences of their Tuareg policies. Thus, while the French had to deal with concealed rebels, the government of independent Mali has had to face an unfavorable political geography due to uncooperative neighbors. This situation allowed rebellion to stay alive outside its borders, which increased the instability climate of the region.

Third, we have shown how corruption also aggravated the level of instability in Mali. Mostly a feature of the colonial legacy, corruption influenced the level of instability in the postcolonial era, by disillusioning an increasing share of the population among which were the Tuaregs.

Institutionalization of corruption in Mali came on top of the ethnic and economic grievances. Despite obvious foreign investments to develop northern Mali, the Tuaregs never saw any improvement of their situation. Instead, misappropriation of funds allowed government officials to grow their fortunes and the black military personnel to get far better career opportunities. Accordingly, grievances among the Tuaregs and the level of associated violence increased because of the sense of profound injustice this additional economic disenfranchisement provoked. Thus, corruption aggravated the latent instability, which was due to ethnic and economic tensions between black and Tuareg ethnicities.

Finally, the colonial legacy also aggravated instability in Mali because it fueled the ethnic grievances between the blacks and the Tuaregs. We have already mentioned how the French administration divided both ethnicities, both socially and economically. After independence, the Tuaregs kept their status of French protégés in the views of the blacks because of the "special" treatment that the Tuaregs had enjoyed during the French rule, while the Blacks had no other choice than submitting to colonial will. The various leaders of Mali employed policies of convenience to manage internal security; however,

many of these policies only served to fuel ethnic grievances between the peoples of Mali, which further increased instability.

In sum, unaddressed historical ethnic tensions and the economic disenfranchisement of the Tuaregs constituted the necessary and sufficient substratum for the 2012 crisis in Mali to unfold. Similarly to a chemical reaction, when exacerbated by the aggravating influence of radical Islam, a difficult geographic and political environment, an endemic corruption, and a harmful colonial legacy, this substratum reacted to provoke the crisis that Mali is still experiencing today.

Chapter 7 - Conclusions and Implications

Since the attacks of 9/11 on the United States, the international community has been fighting terrorist organizations around the world. This struggle has taken different forms, of which the use of the military is merely a manifestation. In parallel, these terrorist groups have increasingly attempted to hijack pieces of land from weak countries in order to establish states of their own, sometimes with the tacit and utilitarian support of local populations. For example, one witnessed such events in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, in Yemen, and more successfully in Lebanon. To prevent such an outcome in Mali, France took military action against such terrorist groups, despite a recent engagement of 11 years in Afghanistan that did not prove very satisfactory.

Several questions may easily rise from this observation; however, the one that got my attention was, "What did we not see happening in Mali that led to the nearly collapse of the state and the current military involvement of France in a foreign country to fight, again, terrorist groups?" Indeed, at the beginning of 2000, according to international experts, Mali was in position to become the living model of a West-African democracy. Instead, 12 years later, it fell into chaos.

Consequently, I decided to focus our search for an answer on the factors that may transform stability into instability, in the specific case of weak and failed states in Africa. Thanks to a rich literature on the subjects of stability and instability, I isolated three main causes of instability: ethnic grievances; religious tensions; and economic disenfranchisement. This literature review also allowed us to put in perspective three additional factors that might aggravate the effects of the aforementioned origins of instability, namely, geography, corruption, and colonial legacy.

Then, I used these six parameters as analytical lenses to examine the history of Mali since its precolonial time. These factors allowed me to understand how Mali rapidly evolved from a promising model of West-African democracy, by 2000, to an obviously divided and chaotic country, used as safe haven by terrorist groups, in 2012.

However, this analysis also showed that it took much more than only twelve years for the conditions leading to the violent events of 2012 to develop and manifest themselves in Mali. Indeed, this historical review of Mali, through the lenses of

stability/instability factors, revealed that two latent conditions have systematically appeared in Malian history since the precolonial era. Ethnic distrust and alternate disenfranchisements of part of the inhabitants of Mali have existed since ancient times. These two factors have consistently fueled each other for centuries, under the aggravating influence of geography, corruption, colonial legacy, and religious extremism. In 2012, the mixture culminated in the crisis that Mali knows today.

The review of precolonial Mali showed how ancient rulers of Mali managed to contain most of the harmful effects of these factors on the stability of their empire. To manage the ethnic and disenfranchisement issues, they implemented a decentralized federal system, which promoted the interests of the empire while taking into consideration the local demands and expectations of its vassals. It also organized the society according to the caste system, which provided the government another tool with which to manage the social and economic expectations of its population.

Furthermore, the rulers of the black empires grasped the utilitarian aspect of religion and the dangers of its extreme practice. Islam became the religion of the ruling elite because it provided opportunities for economic prosperity. However, Islam never became a state religion for all the empire's citizens. On the contrary, rulers tolerated and welcomed other practices for the sake of the empire's prosperity.

Thus, in terms of stability and governance, the black empires were exemplary on several aspects. Obviously, however, they collapsed. But, this collapse was not due to popular upheaval. In fact, the black empires left such an image of stability and prestige in the collective subconscious of the country that the rulers of independent Mali took them as model for their nation-building enterprise. Unfortunately, by 1960, the context for nation building had changed, and grievances grew too great to allow the model to be successful without needed adjustments of policy.

The colonial period, though relatively stable, revealed that continued suspicion existed between the Tuaregs and the black population of Mali, and that the French colonial policy exacerbated ethnic grievances and fostered the future economic and political disenfranchisement of the nomads. The French presence greatly cut the slave trade revenues of the Tuaregs and modified the social order of Mali.

Meanwhile, the French choice of dealing separately with both populations for security concerns artificially isolated the Tuaregs from the rest of the country, which eventually increased the gap between both societies. Each one ended considering the other as a foreigner in his or her own country. Therefore, this policy cultivated stereotypes, which isolated and prejudiced each ethnicity—Blacks and Tuaregs.

In addition, with regard to economy, the French administration badly prepared the Tuaregs to face the modernization of the economic infrastructure that Mali implemented during the decolonization process. From the outcomes of this unpreparedness rose many economic grievances that the black ruling class would subsequently be unable or unwilling to address, creating an increasingly tense social climate in Mali.

Concluding the historical review, the postcolonial period represents the culmination of all these tensions nurtured by centuries of ethnic rivalry and disenfranchisement. Within 50 years, Mali experienced four major Tuareg rebellions due to similar and recurrent motives. Because the government of Mali did not want to—or could not—assure the same level of development in the north as in the south, the Tuaregs relentlessly asked independence, or at least, an increased autonomy in order to self-determine their future.

The postcolonial period review reveals more specifically the importance those ethnic stereotypes had on the economic disenfranchisement of the Tuaregs, which led to political marginalization. Furthermore, this disenfranchisement also explained how radical Islam, traditionally absent from Mali, came to aggravate the already unstable situation.

Moreover, comparing these periods permitted this study to put into historical perspective the continuous and accumulating character of ethnic and economic grievances between the Blacks and the Tuaregs, across history. Additionally, the geography of Mali, both physical and political, continuously aggravated the ethnic and economic grievances between the southern Blacks and northern Tuaregs. After independence, corruption—whose origins date back the colonial period—coupled with Mali's colonial past also exacerbated the ethnic divide of the Malian society and the disenfranchisement of the Tuaregs.

Thus, this study yields two main implications, one at the domestic, and the other at the international levels. The main sources of instability identified in the study highlight factors at the domestic level. Despite the obvious international dimension of today's crisis, decision makers must realize that the crisis in Mali is foremost a domestic one. The cross-history analysis of instability in Mali has revealed that the main source of tension resides in the centuries-long divide between two peoples living within the same borders. Mali cannot solve this dispute without the mutual consent of both parties to start a genuine and fair dialogue between them. What Mali needs today is a real policy of reconciliation, which has been strikingly absent to date. This reconciliation process will have to address the political, economic, and judicial disenfranchisement of the Tuaregs and the attitude—not to say condescension—of the latter toward the black population.

Additionally, the analysis of the aggravating factors that the study has put in perspective provides a second important implication, at the international level. Indeed, international influence is much more likely to affect these factors—geography, corruption, colonial legacy, and religion—than the main source of instability mentioned above. Therefore, these aggravating factors open an avenue for international action. If the Malian people could mitigate these, the situation in Mali might be easier to diffuse. Thus, the immediate neighbors of Mali could surely improve the political geography. Regional cooperation among neighbors in the Sahelian region would be much more profitable for everyone than any attempt to expel instability from one's land, hoping it will not come back, as Algeria did after 2006. If these regional actors cannot realize it, either by themselves or with the help of the broader international community, there is little chance that political geography might stop aggravating the situation.

Similarly, international action could mitigate the effects of corruption by active development programs associated with economic governance guidances. These options obviously require both the cooperation of the government and a minimum of security in the region, in conjunction with the reconciliation process recommended before. Instead of counting simply on direct foreign investments, which would risk misappropriation by corrupted officials, the international community could increase its direct participation and leadership of development programs in the northern region. Associated with these programs, economic governance sponsorship by agencies such as the International

Monetary Fund or the World Bank, with proper safeguards in place, could bring corruption back to acceptable levels.

I believe that if the Malians and the international community could successfully implement such measures, disenfranchisement would probably decrease, helping to dissipate the influence of ethnic stereotypes. As a result, people of northern Mali would probably be less responsive to the radical rhetoric of the Islamists and to the preconceptions cultivated by the colonial past of the country. However, as noted earlier, this crisis is foremost a Malian one that requires, in order to find a solution, the cooperation of both domestic parties. International action will not solve the problem alone, but it can undeniably help a concerted domestic action.

Finally, I want to note the fact that the conclusions of this study apply specifically to Mali and that no one should try to draw some broader generalization from them. Such a generalization would require further investigation of the link between instability and the development of terrorist activities, through the examination of other case studies. As a result, policy makers could have better tools to identify dangerous situations before it were too late. If they could identify these situations soon enough, policy makers could thus have the luxury to consider preemptive measures other than military intervention.

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